

ARTHUR'S HOME MAGAZINE.

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CHRISTMAS CAROL.



L OUD roars the wind, fast
falls the snow,
The night is drear and dark;
Smite the red embers till they glow
With many a jewel-spark.
The feast is set, the guests are come—
We only wait the King;
He comes to-night to grace our home,
While all the joy-bells ring.
Down from high heaven's shining
height
The King of Glory comes to-night!

Decked royally with gold and gem,
While guards angelic wait
Bearing His princely diadem,
He comes in splendid state.
Hark! 'Twas a knock—set wide the
door!

Behold how meek and mild,
Waiting to cross the threshold o'er,
There stands a little Child!
Oh! let the joyous feast begin—
The King of Glory hath come in!

SHIRLEY WYNNE.

MRS. LINDHURST'S BOARDERS.

IF there was anything upon which Mrs. Lindhurst particularly prided herself, it was that of being an infallible physiognomist.

She considered it a gift of nature brought to perfection by observation and experience, and was wont to boast that what she did not know of the characteristics of a person as depicted in the countenance was not worth knowing.

Mrs. Lindhurst was an active, energetic little woman, educated and well informed, and having been left a widow with three small children, she had not only to practice economy to keep the wolf from the door, but to study ways and means to increase the scanty hoard. Magazines were consulted, and several of the approved plans for the making of money by women were tried with tolerable success; yet she felt that the needs of a growing family required not only several irons in the fire, but also several fires to keep the irons from growing cool.

One evening, after a busy day of working in her vegetable and flower garden, she sat down by the grate in her sitting-room, in which glowed a bright little fire, for, although it was the latter part of May, the evenings were cool.

A letter had come to her by the afternoon mail which she had barely taken time to glance over, and now that she was rested and refreshed by a good cup of tea and the children were in bed and the house quiet, she drew it from her pocket to read again and ponder its contents at her leisure.

It was from a young cousin who had spent two weeks of his vacation with her the previous summer and enjoyed every moment of his visit:

"DEAR COUSIN LEW:—I have been thinking of you, and of the jolly visit I

had at your place last summer, and will never forget the boating and fishing and gunning expeditions I had; nor forget that I always had a welcome and a good hot supper when I came back at night hungry as a wolf. Now don't think that I am fishing for another invitation, for I have arranged my vacation trip in another direction; but what I wish to say is this, that it is a pity for you and for those who would miss it, not to have somebody to fill those two charming front rooms which you do not use.

"Summer boarders would be company for you as well as profit, and one notice in a city daily paper would bring a lot of replies, from which you could select such people as you would be willing to receive into your home. Now think of it, and if you conclude to follow my advice and it succeeds, you may thank me for it.

Your attached cousin,
JACK."

"P. S.—Knowing that you pride yourself upon reading faces at sight, I have no hesitancy in making the suggestion, as, with your well-known reputation as a physiognomist, you are safe from accepting what duller people might have cause to regret."

Mrs. Lindhurst indulged in pleasurable consideration over this letter, and she wondered how it was that amid all her plans for adding to her slender income, summer boarders had not formed a part.

"Everything seems to favor such an enterprise," assented her friend, Mrs. Kessler, who had come in, knitting in hand, to spend a sociable evening. "You have a small family, a comfortable house, an excellent garden, plenty of fruit, and just a nice distance out of the village. I don't know any one whom it would suit better to have summer boarders."

"Yes," continued Mrs. Lindhurst, "and as there is a railroad direct from the city, and a station in the village, those who come in answer to the advertisement can, if not satisfied, take board in the neighborhood or return the same day to the city, if they wish."

So it was decided; and that very evening, as soon as Mrs. Kessler had gone, Mrs. Lindhurst got out her writing materials and commenced her notice. Many scraps of paper were scribbled over before the desired result was obtained; but at length her object was set forth in as few words as possible, the money inclosed, the letter directed, stamped, and sealed, and Mrs. Lindhurst was so far on her way to prosperity.

The next morning the children took the precious document, and on their way to school dropped it in the village post-office. On the third day came a reply, which Mrs. Lindhurst opened with eager interest. It was from a family with several small children and a nurse; the husband to come out on Saturday evening and remain until Monday morning. They would take both rooms, wished to come immediately and stay all summer—the latter clause evidently used as an inducement for being accepted. As an offset to this, they wished a conveyance in which they could be driven out every day, a cow kept off grass exclusively for the use of the baby, a telephone, and hot and cold water in their rooms. For board, and these little advantages thrown in, they mentioned the price they were willing to pay per month, which would not have kept them one week in the city.

It was not necessary for Mrs. Lindhurst to wait until she would have an opportunity to scan the party from a physiognomical point of view, but she hastened to impress upon their minds by letter that even in the country bread and butter could not be obtained for nothing, nor were butchers imploring one to take meat off their hands free of charge.

Several days went by, each bringing its quota of letters, and it seemed to Mrs. Lindhurst that the fates had conspired to bring applicants that she could not accommodate. Perplexed, she wondered what could have been in her notice that caused people to ignore any pecuniary benefit it was intended to be to her, and to consider the pleasure of their company was what was solicited instead of compensation.

A week—two weeks passed—and yet the two pleasant rooms remained without occupants.

At length one day there came a resounding rap on the brass knocker of the front door, which caused Mrs. Lindhurst to go forthwith to see what manner of person it was who demanded admittance.

Although she had at intervals all her life heard the sharp "rat-tat-tat" of that same brass knocker, yet it never failed to startle her when used by an inexperienced hand. Though a century out of date, it was a precious treasure in the eyes of Mrs. Lindhurst, for besides being an heirloom descended in a direct line to her, it was the exact counterpart of the one upon the front door of the Longfellow mansion in Cambridge.

When she reached the hall—the door of which stood open, as was the usual custom in summer—she found a little, frail looking elderly lady, clad in a very plain suit of black cashmere. She had already taken her seat upon one of the hall chairs, and was fanning herself gently as she viewed the pretty flower yard and the daisy-gemmed meadow which lay beyond.

"Is this the place where they are willing to take summer boarders, my dear?" inquired she, as Mrs. Lindhurst drew near.

"Yes," replied that lady, hesitatingly, glancing at her visitor, and then at the antiquated leather satchel, which one of the small boys of the village had carried from the depot—"yes, I did think I might take somebody to fill two of my rooms if the right persons happened along."

"Well, my dear, if you think I will suit you I would like to stay. I am not hard to please; all I want is a pleasant place in the country, just for change of air and diet."

"You can look at the rooms," replied Mrs. Lindhurst, slowly, "but I do not suppose the price will suit you, and I really cannot afford to take less."

"Oh! we will not disagree about that, my dear," replied the old lady, serenely, as she paid the boy and let him depart; and, taking her satchel in hand, she followed Mrs. Lindhurst up the broad, old-fashioned stairway.

"Either room suits me exactly," continued she, surveying them approvingly, "and I do not think you ask too much for them;" and she proceeded to lay aside her bonnet in the smallest and least desirable of the two.

Mrs. Lindhurst felt almost bewildered by the suddenness of this conclusion, and in a sort of daze took the wash-pitcher in hand to fill it at the pump in the yard.

"What time do you have tea, my dear?" inquired the old lady upon her return. "I think I will take a nap in this soft, inviting-looking bed in the meanwhile, if it will not interfere with your arrangements."

"Not at all," replied Mrs. Lindhurst; "we have tea at six o'clock."

"A very sensible time," commented the new boarder. "My name is Mrs. Poindexter, called 'Auntie' by most everybody," concluded she, with a little smile of satisfaction.

"Auntie Poindexter!" mused Mrs. Lindhurst, as she slowly descended the stairs to her sitting-room. "I wonder who she is, and if any of those who call her auntie will be responsible for her board. She looks like one of the old ladies from a Church Home, or some other retreat for aged people, and who, though poor now, has seen better times."

Her opinion underwent a little change when Auntie Poindexter came down,

cheerful and refreshed, to tea. A plain but rich black silk, made in rather an antiquated manner, but singularly becoming, had taken the place of the plain cashmere. Rich thread lace was at throat and wrists, while a cap of the same costly material rested upon her beautiful white hair.

"Some one has given her that suit, I suppose," thought Mrs. Lindhurst, scanning her with a physiognomist's eye, as she passed her a fragrant cup of tea. "I think I will ask her for her board weekly; it is as well to be on the safe side."

Auntie Poindexter in the meantime chatted away pleasantly and enjoyed the well-prepared viands, and after tea adjourned to the vine-covered porch, where she drew out her knitting and rocked slowly on a low rocking-chair which Mrs. Lindhurst had taken out for her.

"I shall pay you weekly and in advance, my dear, then it will be off my mind," said she, when Mrs. Lindhurst joined her later; and, taking an old-time portemonnaie from her pocket, she counted out the exact sum.

Mrs. Lindhurst was taken quite aback at her first failure in reading a stranger.

"Oh! I did not expect it of you," said she, confusedly, and feeling that she had almost unconsciously put the accent upon the "you."

"No, I presume not, my dear," smiled Auntie Poindexter; "but it is a little peculiarity in which I like to be humored."

Truly, no one could have been less trouble than this, her first boarder. She was agreeable and intelligent, never encroached upon Mrs. Lindhurst's time nor precincts, always paid her board promptly and in advance; yet, strange to say, Mrs. Lindhurst did not appreciate having her there, as one would have supposed she would have done under such circumstances. But Auntie Poindexter was apparently oblivious of everything but the pleasure of being there, and took her lit-

tle walks and naps, and read and knit in perfect content.

At length a new impetus was given to the whole household by the arrival of three occupants for the remaining room—a mother and two grown daughters—who suited Mrs. Lindhurst's physiognomist ideas exactly.

Their advent had been preceded by a letter, in which was incidentally mentioned that they were foreigners, people of leisure, who were traveling in this country, and wished a quiet country place in which to pass the two remaining weeks of July and all of August in resting for the social festivity of the coming winter.

Mrs. Lindhurst was delighted with each and every one of them; their charming French manner was a revelation to her, and their musical foreign accent pleasant to her ear.

Poor old Aunty Poindexter was completely thrown in the shade by her brilliant fellow-boarders, but this did not disturb her in the least. She followed her own little pursuits placidly as ever, and answered gently and courteously when addressed by Madam Walraven and her two stately daughters.

The new-comers were speedily the centre of society in the village and neighborhood, and Mrs. Lindhurst's hitherto quiet place became a scene of gayety and festivity. They were invited everywhere, and graced every occasion in which they took part. The stately grace of the widowed and still beautiful mother, clad in the richest and deepest of mourning, was as much the theme of admiration as was the artistic beauty and accomplishments of the daughters, whose exquisite toilets were the wonder and emulation of the young people of the neighborhood.

The Walravens, on their part, entered so heartily into the life about them, were so amiable, so cheerful, so suggestive, and, above all, so apparently oblivious that they were the centre and circumference of the refined and instructive amusements which

were making the summer pass with such unprecedented swiftness, that the young people wondered how they ever succeeded in enjoying picnics and like entertainments without them.

It was decided toward the last of the summer that a fair for the benefit of the poor was to be held in the lecture-room of the largest church in the village, and, as usual, the Walravens entered heart and hand in the enterprise. Their talent for embroidery could not be excelled, and they knew how to make so many unique fancy articles, which they volunteered to have ready for the fair if the materials were provided for them. Of course, that want was gladly supplied, and mother and daughters set to work upon the embroidering of a piano-cover and a table-cover which everybody well knew would excel anything ever done before in the neighborhood.

Mrs. Lindhurst in the meantime was not idle; having been appointed general manager of the refreshment-tables, her hands were full. This, however, did not prevent her from attending well to the ways of her own household, although the Walravens, with their usual amiability, insisted that she should not look upon them as boarders during the week of the fair, but just have picked-up meals, or whatever was the least trouble to prepare.

Aunty Poindexter, too, although but little consulted, tried to make less trouble than ever during that busy time, and was diligently finishing a lot of infants' socks which was to be her contribution to the fair.

At length the propitious day arrived, and after breakfast Mrs. Lindhurst put her house to rights, and, with her carriage well stocked with baskets of roasted fowls, pies, cakes, and other good things, she set out for the fair, taking Aunty Poindexter, who was scarcely able to walk so far, and her little maid of all work, who knelt in the front of the carriage and rested her arms upon the dashboard.

The children had been sent to school with a good dinner in their baskets, and would not make their appearance before evening.

"Do not discommode yourself one moment by sending back the carriage for us, dear Mrs. Lindhurst," the elder Miss Walraven had said, with her pretty foreign lisp. "Mamma is hastening to complete the fringe of the table-cover, and by twelve o'clock it will be finished and we will walk into town and bring all our work with us. Sister and I will pack up the piano-cover and the other fancy articles, and mamma, who is already dressed, will be ready to start as soon as her work is completed."

And so, with a smile and a nod, Mrs. Lindhurst gathered up the lines and started, only lingering long enough to tell Miss Walraven to lock the front door and bring the key with her.

The lecture-room of the church was indeed a busy place when Mrs. Lindhurst and her companions reached it.

"Dear Mrs. Lindhurst, we have been looking for you for more than an hour; they need you badly in the cooking-room," said a middle-aged lady, coming forward to meet them. "Let me help you with those heavy baskets," and together they wended their way to the designated place, accompanied by the little maid, while Auntie Poindexter, having nothing particular to do, sat down to take a view of the gayly decorated room and the tables brilliant with flowers. Then she arose and inspected the pretty articles for sale upon the fancy tables, none of which could equal the work done by the Walravens.

Several hours went by, and so fully occupied was Mrs. Lindhurst's time that she was entirely oblivious of all outside and beyond the cooking-room. Tableful after tableful of patrons of the fair had partaken of dinner, and only those who had assisted in preparing it remained to fill the vacant places.

It was then that Mrs. Lindhurst had opportunity to notice for the first time that neither Madam Walraven nor her daughters were present, and a thrill of disappointment and wonderment passed over her.

"What can be the cause?" said she, anxiously, to Auntie Poindexter. "Do you suppose they could have been offended that I did not send the carriage back for them?"

"Oh! no, dear, I think not," said auntie, soothingly. "You offered to do so, and even insisted upon it."

"What could they have had for dinner?" said Mrs. Lindhurst, reflectively, her face reddening with perplexity. "I did not leave a particle of cooked food, for I was so certain they would all be here. I must go immediately home."

"Well, I will go with you, dear," said auntie, rising with alacrity; "you know they are all strangers here to me. But will you not eat your dinner before you go?"

"Oh! no, indeed; I am too anxious to eat. I fear some accident has befallen them, as I am sure, if not offended, nothing else would have prevented their coming."

If any accident had befallen any of them, the house gave no hint or token of it when they came in sight of it, for instead of feet hurrying to and fro, all was silent as the grave. The front door was unlocked, and the key on the inside just as Mrs. Lindhurst had left it in the morning, and Madam Walraven and her daughters were nowhere to be seen.

Quickly Mrs. Lindhurst mounted to their room, followed by Auntie Poindexter and the little maid, but not a vestige of them was visible. Gone were trunks and satchels, the pretty dresses from the clothes press, the unique toilet articles belonging to the Walravens, the piano and table covers made for the fair—all had disappeared. Nothing remained but the delicate breath of some foreign perfume

to give sign and symbol that the whole thing was not a dream and the Walravens but myths.

"Did they owe you anything for their board, dear?" inquired Auntie Poindexter, timidly.

"I have never received a cent in the whole six weeks they have been here. They had plenty of money, which they took no pains to conceal, and I thought it was as safe as though I had it in my hand."

"You will never get it from them, my dear. I doubt if you will ever hear of them again."

The next day was the time appointed for Auntie Poindexter's return to the city, and Mrs. Lindhurst took her and the little old-time satchel to the depot in her carriage.

"How do you do, auntie?" said an elegant looking gentleman, who was leaning from the car window and conversing with a gentleman upon the platform. "I did not expect to have the pleasure of seeing you."

Auntie smiled and nodded, and turned to bid Mrs. Lindhurst good-bye before taking her place in the train.

"Come and see me in the city this win-

ter, my dear," she said, cordially. "I will see that you have a pleasant visit. Here is my address, and don't lose the envelope containing it, for I really wish you to come."

Mrs. Lindhurst thanked her and helped her into the car, and saw her taking a seat on the opposite side. Then she opened the envelope to look at the address, and found a check to the full amount due her from the Walravens.

"I felt sorry for you, dear," ran the little note which accompanied it, "for you were kind to them, so I have taken the liberty of making the loss up to you."

"Yours, AUNTIE."

With it was the address, in one of the most aristocratic parts of city.

"Who was that old lady?" inquired the gentleman on the platform of the elegant stranger who had spoken to Mrs. Lindhurst's boarder.

"It is Auntie Poindexter, the widow of the late president of the G—— and O—— Railroad; she is a lovely old lady, entertains splendidly, and has over a million dollars in her own right," was the reply

MARY E. IRELAND.

THE CHILDREN'S SONG.

WHAT is the song the children hear,
O pealing bells! O Christmas bells!
Echoing high and low?
When skies are dark and winds are drear,
What is the song the children hear
Across the winter snow?
Christ is born (the joy-bells ring),
Christ is born to be our King,
Christ has come from Heaven to bring
Peace to earth below.



CHRISTMAS HAS COME AGAIN.

SOME AMERICAN IMPRESSIONS.

A DAY AT SALEM.

A SOFT, sweet day of early autumn on the edge of a lonely harbor that opens out of Massachusetts Bay; a day like one of the Indian summer a little anticipated, but not like that Indian summer which Hawthorne describes as having "a mist in its balmiest sunshine, and decay and death in its gaudiest delight;" and the little, lonely harbor is that of the port of Salem.

Only a few idle boats rock at anchor in the port of Salem now—Salem, which used to be a sort of New England Sidon. In Salem was set up the first meeting-house in New England for prayer and worship, so they tell. You may see the framework at least of the old building, removed and reset, like some ancient jewel. Still may be visited the room where the witches were tried; still may be seen the pincers with which, according to legend or tradition, the witch was tested. The names of the preachers who preached in the little meeting-house are all duly recorded—some of them famous names like that of Roger Williams and that of the Rev. Mr. Higginson, who is spoken of in *The House of the Seven Gables* as having preached the funeral sermon of Colonel Pyncheon. Our interest was less in the Pilgrim Fathers than in the man who made Salem and the Pilgrim Fathers live for the modern world—the man who made Salem, with its brief existence of some two centuries, seem gray and ancient and old-world as Baalbec or Luxor. We came to Salem to see all that was left of the relics of Nathaniel Hawthorne and his fiction; we came to see the old Custom House, described in the exquisite preface to *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*, and the dwell-

ling overlooking the little burying-ground which is told of in *Dr. Grimshaw's Secret*.

We were under good guidance in our pilgrimage, my friend the author, and I. A kindly and distinguished American scientist whose home is at Salem—he said that even classic Boston was too noisy for him; and the mention of New York made him shudder—had asked us to be his guest for the day, and he had pressed into our service an antiquarian versed in all the ancient lore of Salem, and as ardent an admirer of Nathaniel Hawthorne as we ourselves.

The Professor met us at the station—or the depot, as one ought to say in America—a tall, thin figure, with coat-tails flying as he came cordially forward to greet us; a bright, sympathetic face, full of sweetness and intellect, manner and movements giving an impression of culture, determination, intense spontaneity, mental alertness, and animal spirits—all going to make up a most delightful and entertaining personality.

I could not have guessed, as he seized our bags, gave us his warm welcome, and rushed us down the platform, talking eagerly all the while, that this brimming vivacity was no more than an overplus of the enthusiasm which had devoted itself to Brachiopods, had tracked out Man in the Tertiaries, had rummaged prehistoric shell heaps, and explored Japanese dolmens.

Among the many things for which our Professor is famous may be counted the possession of the largest and most valuable collection of Japanese pottery in the world. His pottery is his pet child, his dearest enthusiasm. Before we began our pious pilgrimage it was unanimously de-

cided that we should do homage to his collection. So he drove us first to his house—one of the quaint, irregular wooden houses of New England, with a sloping red roof, standing back from the road, and took us straight to his sanctum—his work-room, he called it.

An ideal work-room, all of wood except for the rough red brick of the chimney, which made a sort of overmantel and was set with curious tiles and contrasting bits of dark blue pottery; the floor polished wood, a big table strewn with papers, pamphlets, and scientific appliances, and a great window through which came a quivering play of sunbeams from among shadowy foliage. It was all in keeping, somehow, with quaint Salem and with the New England scene, and it was not like any other room in which I ever sat. All round, to within a space of some three feet from the ceiling, where hung Japanese designs and sketches in water-color, were rows of shelves to the floor; and against a background of crimson cloth was ranged the precious ware—bowls, vases, cups, teapots, teajars, odd bits in every manner of shape and device—all in rich, harmonious coloring, such as one does not find in these days; a province, as we were told, in each compartment.

It was delightful to see how the Professor's face lighted up as he pointed out his treasures. "Here *is* a surprise for you!" he exclaimed, and he drew back a step. "Ah! these are my triumphs!"

He looked from our interested faces to the collection, intensely enjoying both. He knew that he was showing us something well worthy of our appreciation. Then he glanced a little nervously at my hands. "Won't you take off your gloves?" he said, anxiously. "I did want you to touch them," he explained afterward. "But you can't imagine what I suffer when ladies are looking at my collection, and when they take up a pot and admire it. If they'd only grasp the thing—but they won't. They hold it between their

thumb and first finger, with a satchel and kerchief in their hand at the same time, and they say how pretty it is. And you know," he added, with deep pathos, "it one was broken I *couldn't* replace it."

I liked to see the Professor lift and lovingly handle his teajars. He would touch them and stroke them as if they were human, and, indeed, somehow they did seem human. They had gotten the sort of magnetism that clings round inanimate objects which have wrought themselves into the lives of some living or dead persons.

"Just touch this," the Professor would say, holding to me a little brown pot. "Feel the glaze and the inequalities. See, it was baked upside down, and there are the marks of the maker's five fingers, which had clay on them when he put it in. Why, a blind man could enjoy this pot. And this!—isn't it a little darling? It's two hundred years old. Ah! if one *could* only live up to these teajars! Do you see the straw stoppers? Are not they delicious? Every one a different shape! This is where I sort them. You know I get many without any sort of mark, and often I spend days and days groping, and it's all a hopeless maze. Then suddenly one tumbles into its right period and its right province, and then half a dozen or them march along."

The Professor told us many curious and interesting things about Japanese art and customs. He humorously described his quest after specimens of pottery, how with infinite pains and adventure he had obtained this and that rare piece—how by a lucky chance five Tokio cups, a set said to be unprocurable, had come into his possession—and he showed them to us, and the case which had held them; how he had collected specimens of each kind of pottery made from the beginning of time in each province. To him each cup had a history; each pot was, as it were, a separate individuality. He showed us the exquisite gray of the old Satsuma, and the

marvelous glaze of the ancient Tokio ware. He talked with gentle ecstasy about the "feeling" in the quaint old jars.

"That's just the wonder of it," he said. "The Japanese put *himself*—his soul—into the thing he made. He took his designs from nature. He understood the laws of harmony. Take that for a flower-vase—a rich, soft monotone, the color of the rocks that wild flowers creep over! What do we do? We kill the delicate tints of our blossom with the cruder coloring of our vase. See this cigar-stand—the grace, the perfection of it!" And with extreme reverence he took up the model of a lotus calyx in soft gray, the rough, large leaves curling backward and forming a base. "The Japanese have never been under the sway of that principle of bilateral uniformity which is the curse of our art. Oh! dear me!"—the Professor heaved a deep sigh—"and we call this people heathens!—and we send missionaries to them!"

"There's a curious ethnological fact, now! Dolmens in Japan, and facing south and all!" And *à propos* of some bits of pottery which he said were twelve hundred years old, and that he had dug out of a Japanese dolmen, the Professor with characteristic versatility darted off upon a disquisition on dolmens, barrows, and their relation to civilized humanity; thence to the deterioration in the size of the shell species, and to Tertiary Mammoths, and so on; and then pulled himself up with a funny half-remorseful, half-regretful laugh. "Now we've got to do Hawthorne;" and he turned us out of his work-room, to our own regret—for we could have lingered there very happily for a good while longer. "I've got a dear old gentleman to show us about," said the Professor, "because he knows where 'The House of the Seven Gables' is, and all the rest; and I'm not sure that I do. I haven't time for Hawthorne, except on an occasion like this; I'm too much taken up

with my brachiopods and my shell heaps."

We stopped in one of the old-fashioned streets and picked up the Antiquarian, a most courteous and kindly white-haired gentleman, with a fund of interesting information on matters quaint and out-of-the-way in New England history, and, indeed, the compiler of some volumes of curious records of Puritan punishments and forgotten crimes. He talked of the Witchcraft Epidemic, and took us to the house of Roger Williams—the oldest in Salem—where the witches underwent their preliminary examination. We went into the room itself, a dark, old-world chamber, now a sort of lumber room behind a drug-gist's storc, with low ceiling, heavy oaken beams, and ghostlike corners, and with a low, wide window and overhanging upper story which carried us back to the days of the Pilgrim Fathers. He showed us also the house where Nathaniel Hawthorne was born, and that in which the Peabodys lived, and where the author of *The Scarlet Letter* wooed his wife—both of them straight-up-and-down wooden buildings, with venetianed windows facing the street, and without the picturesqueness of the early wooden houses, or the prettiness of the modern villas, which are gabled, verandaed, and red-shingled. The house in which Hawthorne was born once owned an old door with a knocker that took the fancy of an enterprising American lady in search of relics. The Antiquarian related mournfully how the lady had laid siege to the proprietor, and had straightway concluded a bargain by virtue of which the old door, with its knocker, became her property, in exchange for a brand new door, manufactured in Salem and bought for a dollar and a half.

These Salem streets have a peaceful, semi-rural look, with their slightly raised sidewalks, grass grown in places, and the avenues of spreading trees, now golden-red, from which occasionally a leaf softly

fluttered. This vividness of autumnal coloring gave a certain fantastic aspect to the place. The day was very still, and the time of decay and dropping was not quite yet. The trees were in full leaf, showing no withered foliage or bare branch stems; but they had not a trace of summer green. It was if in clear noon-day they had become steeped in the glory of setting sun. Some were pale gold, others a deep orange, others again glowing red; and here and there, in a gorgeous maple, all these hues blended.

In some of the streets there are fine old mansions of dull red brick, with which the tones of the now crimsoning creepers harmonized poetically—houses in which one could fancy generations succeeding each other, and retaining in fainter degree the stately simplicity and grave decorum of their Puritan ancestors. But these houses belong to the first quarter of the century, and were occupied by Salem merchants in the days of her commercial prosperity. When Hawthorne wrote, the Custom House overlooked only dilapidated wharves, and ships from the East no longer landed their rich goods at the once flourishing port.

We wanted to see this same Custom House, which Hawthorne has immortalized in his preface to *The Scarlet Letter*, and entreated the Professor, who had whirled us past Dr. Grimshaw's house, to let the carriage stop a few moments while we gazed at the red brick edifice. It stands there just as Hawthorne described it, with its pillared portico and flight of granite steps, and the huge, fierce American eagle grasping her bundle of arrows, hovering with outspread wings over the entrance.

The Professor regarded us with amused and benevolent wonder. Our interest would have seemed to him perfectly natural had the Custom House been a prehistoric shell mound; but his expression of amusement deepened to one of vague bewilderment as he listened to the Author

and the Antiquarian in their talk of the days of King Derby, and their speculations as to the authenticity of *The Scarlet Letter* tradition.

"To think of you people taking it all so seriously!" he said. "I believe you've just got it all up on purpose. I don't believe you ever read a line of Hawthorne till you landed in New York and bought him for fifty cents." But the Professor's vivacious adaptability was one of his most charming characteristics. Before we had driven down "Pyncheon" Street to "The House of the Seven Gables" he was as keenly enthusiastic as we ourselves. He began to see new vistas of research opening out before him, and his active mind turned on to the subject as ardently as if he had scented an ethnological discovery.

Yes, there was the quiet little by-street leading to the water's edge, and there on our right stood the rusty wooden house with its acutely peaked gables, three of them visible, standing close by the road in a garden fronting the harbor, and with a tree shading the entrance. The garden stretched out a little at the further side and behind. It looked melancholy and deserted. The foliage here was not vivid red and gold, but a pale, dull yellow, as though the sun did not love to linger upon the weather-beaten old dwelling. The gable, which projected on the street, roofed what had surely once been Hepzibah's shop. The timber walls had a coat of faded yellow paint, dusty and dirty for lack of renewal; the slabs overhanging the windows were dull red. There were patches of moss here and there upon the red, scale-like shingles, and one might have fancied a tuft of "Alice's posies" growing in the angle of the gables. It is a queer old house, and fairly recognizable, allowing for some slight poetic idealizing. No great stretch of the imagination was needed to make the romance real and living. All lent itself to the illusion. There was something distinctly Hawthornesque in the mellow October day, the dreamy

haze on the water, the autumnal foliage, and the silence and stillness of the scene.

Before going in, we walked down to the end of the street, and, leaning upon the fence which divides it from the water, looked over the lonely harbor and across to our left at a crumbling warehouse and decaying wharf, where an old sailor and a boy were tinkering up a rotten-looking boat—the only human beings whom we could see. As we looked down upon the rocky beach, a cat crept stealthily round from the garden of the Seven Gables. It was a lean, uncanny cat, of a color I have never before seen—a curious reddish-gray; and it had big, wild eyes, that glared at us in a frightened manner, though it did not attempt to run away.

"A truly Hawthornesque cat," said the Author. "I wonder if it can be that grimalkin which prowled about the night when Judge Pyncheon sat dead in the oaken chair. Let us go, Professor, and find the room in which Judge Pyncheon died."

"Judge Pyncheon!" repeated the Professor, a little puzzled. He had made the discovery that the cat's fur was the same color as the rocks, and was perhaps deducing a theory therefrom. "When did he die? Was he a Boston man? Oh! now I see, you're poking fun at me, you novel-writers and novel-readers. Ah!" he murmured, in mock melancholy, "science tends to realism. Come," he cried, alert again, "isn't this delicious! Let us see everything." And he started off with his quick, vivacious tread. "Are we to knock and ask admittance?"

"The good lady asks twenty-five cents entrance money," said the Antiquarian. "She used to show the place for nothing, but now there are so many callers that she is obliged to make a charge."

"Much more satisfactory," briskly returned the Professor. "Now we can rummage about the attics without hurting anybody's feelings. I am convinced

there's something worth finding in the attics."

The Antiquarian uttered an exclamation of dismay, which we chorused, as we followed his glance to the roof.

"They've taken away the chimney," he cried—"the old chimney—Hawthorne's 'clustering chimney.'"

"Let us remonstrate," said the Professor, "and try to stop them from pulling down any more." He opened fire at once upon the lady who admitted us, and who, in a strangely cut and quaintly flowered gown, seemed not a wholly unfitting representative of Hepzibah Pyncheon herself. "Why did you take the chimney down?" said the Professor. "You shouldn't have done that. These people have come all the way from England on purpose to see that chimney."

Our hostess looked genuinely sympathetic, and somewhat remorseful.

"Well, sir," she said, "the chimney smoked. I guess it wasn't safe for the children; and my husband, who is a carpenter, thought he'd rather have a new one; but we've kept three of the bricks that have the date 1630 on them, and the old fireplace, and an Indian arrow-head, and some platters we found when we were pulling it down, if you'd like to see them."

She produced two smoked bricks, with some hieroglyphics scrawled on them, which the Professor examined with curiosity, and the Antiquarian and ourselves with reverence.

"1630! That's interesting, anyhow. An Indian arrow-head, did you say?" The Professor's eyes glistened with eagerness, but the light went out of them as he turned over the little implement which Hepzibah—as we afterward christened the good lady—handed him. "No, it isn't an Indian arrow-head. They were mostly made of stone." Off the Professor started on arrow-heads, and the various methods of arrow release, and their ethnological significance, while our guide led us into "Hepzibah's parlor." I don't believe

the Professor had a notion who Hepzibah was, though he admired the old-fashioned room, with its oak window-seats, its low, studded ceiling, long, narrow mantel-piece, queer, spindle-legged furniture, and wall-paper flowered somewhat after the fashion of our Hepzibah's gown. The Professor's mind was running on the chimney.

"Haven't you got anything else out of that chimney?" he asked. "Chimneys were often used as places of concealment. Any trinkets or bits of pottery or old nails? 1630! Now there's sure to have been some of those curious red, wrought-iron nails."

"Well, I don't know," returned our hostess. "I guess we only looked some. There's a heap of bricks and sand in the back yard. It's going to be carted right away."

"It's going to be carted right away!" repeated the Professor. "Let us go at once and explore the rubbish mound. It won't be the first for me. I'm used to shell heaps." He darted off. Three or four fowls were scratching on the pile of refuse. They were bigger than the historic Pyncheon breed, but not much bigger. They did not look as if they thrived. "Maule's well is over there," interjected our Hepzibah, and perhaps the fowls had drunk at it and suffered from its maleficent effects. The Professor poked about in the dry mortar, but without any great result. "Now if one only had time!" he said, ruefully, and picked out two of the most ancient looking bricks, one for me and one for himself. "They would make curious and interesting paper-weights," he explained, "with just a bit of leather round them to lift them up by, and the rough dust brushed off." I shall preserve that brick as a memento of the genial, sweet-natured Professor.

We prowled round the garden, which must have shrunk in its dimensions since the Pyncheons' time. It, too, looked melancholy and shadowed, as if brooded over by some evil omen. There was a butt of stagnant water and a grape trellis on

which the leaves were yellowing, and the last purple bunches hung dark and decaying. The squashes, looking like big lumps of gold on their naked vines, lay straying on the path. There was one solitary yellow dahlia in the flower-bed.

"I don't see the *seven* gables," said the Professor, peering upward and around. "I believe they were a make-up of Hawthorne's, and that there never were more than four."

"The House of the Four Gables' wouldn't have sounded well," replied the Antiquarian, in gentle apology. "Seven is the natural number—the seven champions, the seven deadly sins, the seven lamps, the seven gables."

"Of course, Hawthorne was bound by all the laws of romance and poetry to make it seven," put in the Author, in vindication of his craft.

We mounted the dark oaken staircase and went through the upper rooms, spacious, low-ceiled, matching the parlors beneath; and then up to the attics—the Professor clambering first through the dust and the dimness, exclaiming, as he groped his way: "Now, isn't this interesting? Isn't it delicious? I'd like to come here and rummage with a bull's-eye lantern and my old clothes on." He poked the broken floor and the broken ceiling, and picked off and carefully pocketed a piece of the ancient plaster made with grass, which he declared he must have for "The Institute." "Now don't you go pulling down all that plaster, as you did the chimney," he said, in amiable remonstrance to Hepzibah.

We found a bloated spider in the corner of one of the tiny windows, and we decided that it, too, was Hawthornesque. The Professor suggested that we should carry him home and pickle him as a relic. On the whole, we got a great deal of pleasant fun out of our visit to "The House of the Seven Gables."

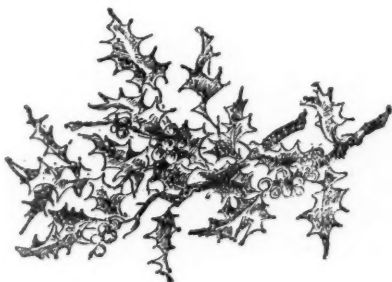
The afternoon was waning, and there was not much time left for the Essex In-

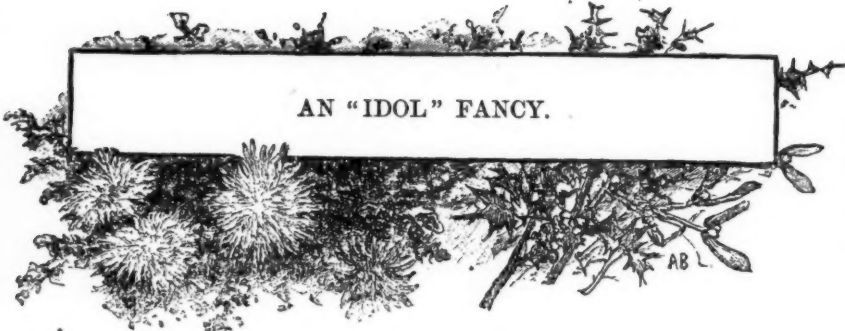
stitute, the First Church, Plummer Hall, and the other notable places in Salem. There seemed something very pathetic in the wee wooden framework, so carefully preserved, of the tiny meeting-house which the Pilgrim Fathers had set up; in the little collection of relics, such as the first communion altar, the first spinet made in Salem, the desk Nathaniel Hawthorne used at the Custom House—in the records of the early days which were so short a time ago compared with Old World history. The aged President of the Institute accompanied us in our hurried walk through the place, which was so full of interest that we would gladly have stayed there some hours. He too seemed in harmony with his surroundings. His face, shadowed by snowy hair, is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. It might be that of an ideal Pilgrim Father, with its delicate, regular features, its sweet smile, and earnest eyes.

"Here is the man who can tell you more about Massachusetts' past history than any one in the world," said the Professor, as he was carrying us on again.

"Isn't he a whirlwind?" said the old gentleman, with an affectionate look toward the flying Professor.

The setting sun made a brighter glory than even the autumnal foliage in the avenues leading westward as we drove back to the Professor's house. Then came a cozy meal served on quaint Japanese plates, and tea out of real Japanese tea-pots, and an hour or so of chat with the ladies of the Professor's family. It was late when we caught the train for Boston, and the Professor's last words as he waved us off were: "Don't forget me," as if we were in the least degree likely to forget that bright, sympathetic presence which had so enhanced for us the charms of Hawthorne's Salem!—*Temple Bar.*





AN "IDOL" FANCY.

SEATED in my study, one raw, cold Christmas morning, buried in the soft embraces of my favorite arm-chair before a blazing fire of logs, I was reading, for perhaps the twentieth time, the first portion of a letter received a week ago, from my one and only sister, then traveling in the bamboo-shaded, sandal-scented regions of Japan.

I was a bachelor, moderately good looking, moderately young, and more than moderately rich; fairly appreciating all the many advantages that I possessed, and fairly enjoying all the dainty morsels the gods favored me with in the shape of pleasure and social delights; but, still, somewhat of a recluse in my way, naturally a little selfish in my desires, and entirely oblivious to the many bewitching bait thrown in my direction by well-meaning mammas and soft-eyed, thrilling-voiced daughters, and would willingly thrust these aside, absolutely unconscious of their many charms, for the sake of my one all-absorbing, all-unconquerable passion—china.

To say that I possessed a unique collection but mildly painted the gross aggregate of my long and tedious hours of devotion to this goddess of my existence; years had I spent in delving among the old, shop-worn relics of greedy collectors; giving fabulous sums for some choice stray bit of cloisonné enamel, or traveling miles in

search of some precious specimen, said to have been painted by one of the old masters; oftentimes disappointed and deluded by spurious imitations, and oftentimes, to my rare delight, picking up such lovely, dainty tinted antiques as were only fit for the ambrosial nectar of Olympus itself.

In this way, by much study, much expense, and much harder personal experience, I had become such a correct art critique that my opinion was eagerly and speedily sought after, and my censure was as much feared as my praise was applauded.

But to return to my letter. It was dated Yokohama, and began:

"MY DEAR CIS:—Knowing your perfect craze for china antiques and *curios* of all descriptions, I send by steamer one of the most unique and hideous creations—I have learned from your very able instructions that the more hideous and dreadful they are, the more are they to be appreciated—that ingenuity or imagination could produce. It is at once the most beautiful and most terrible-looking work of art that I have ever seen.

"I found it in one of the remote corners of this very ancient of cities, and the almond-eyed, amber-tinted Jap who sold it to me declared, with many appealing glances and more than many shakes of his wonderful queue, that it was the finest

piece of its kind to be found anywhere among all their horrible treasures. He almost bowed himself to the ground with grief when I suggested that it might not be as valuable as it looked, and the marvelous pig-tail almost came to naught in his great zeal to impress on my mind its genuine antiquity. He declared it was over five hundred years old, and promised on his sacred honor as a Mongolian that it should reach you, safely and intact, punctually on Christmas morning. What more could an almond-eyed Mongolian do? Therefore, my dear Cecil, receive it with many happy returns of the day and many affectionate embraces from the donor, and place it for my sake, for its hideousness fairly makes me writhe, as far as possible from that part of the domestic hearth inhabited by the restless, wandering spirit you call sister."

Here followed a long description of her travels and many minute details relative to chop-sticks and rice that I had read and inwardly digested before. But the remarkable *curio*, why did it not arrive?

I began to impatiently walk the floor in my anxiety, unheeding of the many other *objets de vertu* that surrounded me, and that I had spent so many hours in collecting.

What matter that the cases groaned with the weight of their rare loveliness; that they appealed to me insensibly, but vainly, with their witching beauty! No, their power to charm was lost, for the moment, and I waited, with all the frenzy that only an art connoisseur can understand, for this wonderful unknown, this more than realized conception, that my eyes were aching to behold, and that I felt sure would repay my longings with happiness!

I had heard of its safe arrival on our shores two days ago, and wondered at the delay.

A horrible doubt that my telegram had never reached the express office began to assail me, and my fears were commencing

to assert themselves in imprecations and assaults on the offending officials, when a sonorous, double rap on the huge brass knocker awoke me to the present, and a moment after the portière was swung back to admit this foreign visitor so tenderly looked for, so craved, and that was still wrapped in that most seductive, most alluring of all veils, mystery.

It was a much larger case than I had anticipated seeing, plentifully covered with all the trade-marks and insignia of foreign travel, that more than added to its attractiveness, and, impatient as I was to behold its inner self, I still lingered caressingly over the removal of its long, thin nails, and tenderly lifted, with fingers gently toned to their loving task, the wrappers, one by one, that enveloped this treasured enigma. Oh! the delight of it! The pungent, breezy, sandal-wood odor that arose and filled my nostrils with its balmy perfume! The dainty, flimsy, silken tissues that only an Oriental can weave, and that I pressed softly to my lips, the more to feel their clinging fibres! Last of all, came one, softer, more silky, more fibrous than all the rest, and over this I lingered longest, miserably anxious, yet hardly daring to lift this remaining delicate, cobweb-like covering from the treasure that my fingers were thrilling to possess.

I could count the beatings of my heart-throbs! I could mark the rapid rising of my pulse, as finally this inner veil was cautiously, tremblingly removed, and my soul's desire lay revealed.

Not too soon, for my restless hands could hardly lift the bulky form from its deep recess, or steadily hold it when thus secured.

As it stood uncovered I saw for the first time that it was a vase. But what a vase! It measured over five feet in height, and at my first look I turned from it in loathing and horror, shivering with disgust, for, art-crazed as I was, I still shuddered at the sight of torture, and this was so glar-

ingly portrayed in the terrible conception before me, that involuntarily I closed my eyes and for a full moment could look no longer.

When at length I reopened them and met again the appealing, frenzied gaze that came from this inanimate piece of tortured clay, I became fascinated, and looked and looked again, answering back those glowing eyes and worshiping with an almost immortal devotion that lovely, dainty form, that writhed and worked in life-like agony before me.

Let me describe it as it then appeared to me.

Of the most delicate and transparent china, tinted to life, it was cast in the mold of the most beautiful woman I had ever beheld. Her perfect form was draped after the rarest of classic models, but the folds were arranged with such artistic consistency as to almost delude one into the belief that they were woven; her lovely arms were thrown aloft and extended beseechingly, while her charming face was contorted into the most agonized expression, and her speaking eyes had all the terror and horror of the eternal fires in their depths, for coiled, partly at her feet, partly round the stem of the vase, and raising its crafty head, hideous in the extreme, its poisoned fangs almost reaching the alabaster whiteness of her arms, was the most terrible, life-destroying serpent that ancient or mediæval history could produce.

What did this wonderful work of art mean? Why was this lovely woman thus tortured day and night, unceasingly, almost in the embrace of this inhuman monster, and never entirely free from its venomous, ever-stinging fangs?

In what part of remote Japan had she thus wandered, yes, perhaps did still wander? for this could be but a life-like portrayal of one of their infamous legends, and no doubt this unhappy creature, ever young and immortal, yet trod their unknown shores!

Did her restless spirit inhabit, too, this perfect image of herself, that it appeared so lovely and so life-like?

So real, so speaking did she seem, that I stood entranced, fascinated, rooted to the spot.

Why could I not find her, rescue her from this more than awful terror? Surely, human agony spoke to me from those lovely eyes, and implored me to find her real self, to trace out her history, and release her.

Never had a living presence so roused my life-energies; never had I felt so powerless—utterly unable to rescue; and, as the misery of her writhing form, the frenzy of her tortured look, still held my speechless gaze, I sank, as one senseless, before her, covering my eyes with my hands, and uttered a groan of agony, helpless to relieve.

—
For three long years had I owned this almost priceless vase; for three long years had I wondered and pondered over its history—for history and reality I felt sure it portrayed.

Deeper and deeper did I dive into the musty volumes of Japanese lore to fathom its mysterious secret, studying the language with a zeal and fervor that made me master of this marvelous tongue, and enabled me to understand its written characteristics with wonderful accuracy.

But as yet I had come no nearer the solution. My beautiful unknown still wandered alone and forsaken, save by the horrible monster ever ready to devour her!

In vain had I studied, with a chart, the innermost recesses of almost unheard-of mountain ranges; in vain had I made research into the shores of questionable inland waters—all to no purpose!

Her beautiful, tantalizing, harrowing image was ever before me; day and night I thought and dreamed of her loveliness.

Never before had a subject so fired my imagination, so wrought upon my feel-

ings; I was frenzied with an impotent inability to help her, and ever thrilled with a desire to unravel the mystery that held her in this maddening torture.

My friends almost feared for my reason, so great had become my infatuation; and my sister, over and over, deplored her sad lack of sense in sending such a powerful incentive to an already too vivid imagination.

Many envied me my idol, as it was called; many turned, with wild cries, from its awful, fascinating presence, and all agreed in thinking it the most bewildering, horrible, beautiful creation ever seen.

As for myself, it held complete power over me; not for worlds would I have parted with it, and I would sit for hours, contemplating the marvelous loveliness of this inanimate *Lorlei*; talking to her, imploring with her, holding out my hands to her with entreaty and compassion, pouring out my sympathy for her silent woes, until I really grew to believe her almost human, and could imagine that the terror-stricken eyes were real and silently implored my sympathy, that the rounded arms would extend with a still more entreating gesture, and by degrees the conviction gained upon me that I loved the beautiful tortured being, the restless spirit this image portrayed; that I worshiped the wandering, immortal, unhappy form made so personally real in the glowing china with a passion far surpassing all others; that I reveled in this vision of her glorious beauty, and that I loved and breathed but in this second presence, this life-like reality, of her lovely self.

More than ever did I determine to find her; worse and worse grew my infatuation and my agony for her safety, until I could not rest but in her sight, and waited hourly for a revelation of her life-history.

Losing health and strength in my vain endeavor to discover her captivity, I would pore over my books, trying to find

the story of her wretched wanderings, refusing in my earnest quest the food that a loving sister brought me, for, at the last, I could not be induced to leave the room made sacred by her image.

Intent and absorbed thus on Christmas morning, just three years from the eventful one that had given this enchantress to me, I was studying aloud one of the mysterious legends of an old Japanese book.

The story ran, that a certain lovely, beautiful, and devoted *Talkio*, daughter of a powerful emperor, proving faithful to the lover of her heart, and refusing marriage with a potentate of her father's choosing, had been condemned, on discovery, to be pursued by serpents, and compelled to wander ever after, always in terror, but never devoured, and whose heart-rending cries, as she restlessly eludes her enemies, fill the souls of trembling maidens with horror.

Struck with the force of the narrative, and with its thrilling similitude to the one I sought, in my great joy and eagerness I rose to my feet, and seeking the eyes of my idol, was delighted to find they almost responded to my questioning glances, that the lovely arms seemed more fully extended than ever, and I imagined that an almost living flesh tint was gradually spreading itself over the speaking face and was glowing in rosy blushes on the rounded cheeks.

In my emotion I advanced a step further, and suddenly clasped in my arms the almost life-like form of my beloved.

To my delight the serpent vanished away, and clasping her still more closely, I implored her to awake to life, to bless me with her love, to let me save her from the awful terrors that menaced her!

She seemed to yield to my embrace, the lovely arms grew warm around my neck, and with her own sweet lips she spoke with thrilling intonation in her native tongue:

"I am *Talkio*," she whispered, softly.

"Over five hundred years of torture! over five hundred years of torture! Oh! the misery of it! the misery of it! To be released at last—at last!" she faintly added, but her voice was weaker than at first, and her form grew more and more indistinct.

How I watched her while she spoke! How I caught her again and again to my heart, to feel sure that she would not elude me and turn to inanimate stone again!

How I gazed into the tender loveliness of her charming face, and sought to find a depth to the starry brightness of her eyes!

Her lips opened once again, her eyes looked tenderly in mine, but she grew fainter and fainter to my sight, and I knew she was fading slowly and slowly away from me forever.

As her arms were unwound gently from my neck, I could see nothing but the indistinct shadow of her form; she seemed to glide gently from my clasp; I heard a

crash, and sank, fainting and miserable, to the floor.

"My dear Cis, thank Heaven you are awake once more, and conscious! Had it not been for that elixir that I brought with me from Japan, and the skillful, untiring assistance of our good Dr. Blankiston, I really fear that by this time you would have been singing the Allelujah Chorus with an angelic choir!"

"But she! Talkio! where is she?" I exclaimed, in a husky and entreating voice.

"Nay, never again, my dear Cis! Thank your lucky stars your hideous idol is broken to atoms! Not a respectable piece remains intact, and I have this moment ordered the shattered fragments to be decently interred, never, I hope, to be resurrected. Merry Christmas, old boy, and a long, long life to you! Go to sleep now, and let your dreams be, not of Japanese legends and idols, but condescend to the more mundane delights of Christmas bells and smoking plum-pudding."

L. S. L.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

I.

GHOSTS.

THE twinkle of each household light,
The moonbeam's glint across the
snow,
The glorious beauty of the night
Is just as in the long ago—
In "Merry Christmas" long ago.

"A Merry Christmas!" not for me,
For ghosts come crowding 'gainst my
will
As Memory lifts her wand, and see!

They enter over each barred sill,
The restless ghosts that will not still.

They crowd the hall, they climb the stair,
They pass through every empty room,
They fill again each vacant chair
With semblances from out the tomb.
O ghostly presences of gloom!

O ghosts of days forever fled!
Why come ye back to break my heart?
Your place is in your graveyard bed,
Your chilling presence heals no smart.
O ghosts of Christmas past! depart.

II.

ANGELS.

The twinkle of each household light,
 The moon's soft beam on drifted snow,
 The holy calm of solemn night,
 Is just as in the long ago—
 In "Merry Christmas" long ago.

And sweet and clear, from vale and hill,
 The Christmas bells are heard once more,
 "Peace on the earth, to men good-will"
 Sweet sound to all hearts sad and sore
 For vanished, happy days of yore.

The angels! angels! Through each
 room

The shining, white-robed creatures go;
 In darkened hall, on stairway loom,
 And every radiant face I know;
 They spirits are from long ago.

O Christmas angels! With me still
 Your silent, blissful presence keep,
 Then, though the present bring me ill,
 Since I've the past, I will not weep—
 O Christmas angels! guard my sleep.
 LENA LESLIE.



GATHERING MISTLETOE.

HOPPITY'S CHRISTMAS BLESSING.

"WELL, Hoppity, what makes yer so dumpish?" asked a scarecrow of a lad of ten or twelve, taking his stand at a certain crossing, with his wares, which happened to be pretty, yellow-coated daffodils of the country, where the spring breezes were romping and making merry the livelong day.

But in the smoky, shadowy, many-sided town, the winds sweep round street corners with a keenness which meant more than mirth. Hoppity and he who addressed him shivered in their scanty garments. Hoppity was a pitiful mite of deformity, impotence, and puniness, leaning on a crutch, with a shoulder which told what the crutch had done for him; but rejoicing in the office of crossing-sweeper, if that was anything in which to rejoice. At any rate, his wan, worn face was not at all jubilant this morning; it certainly was, as his companion expressed it, dumpish and sorrowful.

"Don't yer know?" responded Hoppity, leaning on his broom, his arm on his supporting crutch, and scanning with sad-eyed pride a scrap of crape tied round his sleeve.

"No—yer don't mean to say some of yer folks have gone and died?" quoth the other, blankly.

"I do—mother's gone." Hoppity's eyes filled with tears—beautiful eyes they were—all tender thoughts seemed ever to be crowding in their gray depths.

"And the kids?"

"Oh! them comes to me."

Poor Hoppity!

"As a *legarcy*?" said the other, comically.

"Oh! don't *larf*, Tom," pleaded Hoppity, pathetically.

"I aint a-larfin', I'm a-sympathizin' with yer, as the swells says."

At this juncture Tom had a grand stroke of business to attend to, a family of sunny-haired girls coming up, and each buying a bunch of his flowers; while their mamma dropped a penny into sad-eyed Hoppity's palm, as he bowed his best bow, and stood aside as in waiting. Trade seemed slack with him, now those dry, harsh breezes were come; sloppy, slushy weather was the time when people remembered the poor crossing-sweepers. Well, all trades and crafts have their ebb as well as their flood-tides.

"There are three, aren't there—and one a werry little kiddy?" asked Tom, after this.

"Yes, she's three months old," spoke Hoppity, with the grave air of a precise mother.

"And where are the blessin's now?" queried Tom, disposing of another bunch of flowers, and returning to the subject, with the jaunty air of a good salesman.

"Ay, blessin's they are—that's what mother called 'em when she were alive, and I'd like to keep up the name," returned Hoppity, as if speaking to himself.

"Well, and where are them?" asked Tom, again.

"At home; I locked 'em in."

"How do yer know so much?" queried Tom; and no wonder, for there, coming up behind him, were the identical *kiddies*, as Tom put it, the elder toiling along as best he could under the weight of the three-months-old baby.

Two ill-clad laddies of five and three, though with a touch of respectable poverty about them. The baby was wrapped in an old woollen shawl, on the corners of which her nurse stepped perilously every few steps. And the miniature little woman was using her lungs, too; such pettish screams issued from the enfolding

shawl as they came toddling up to Hoppity from behind.

"Well, well, my head never does save my heels: now I thought I locked that door, and I didn't!" ejaculated Hoppity, as the weakling of a nurse dropped his charge from sheer weariness at his brother's feet.

"She wouldn't keep quiet, nohow, Hoppity," pleaded the culprit in excuse for his presence there, while his brother picked up the small, ruffled bundle in the shawl, scarce knowing which was head and which foot thereof. And didn't she scream, in spite of Hoppity's "Hush-a-by, hush-a-by," and croonings over her, after the manner of an old, accustomed nurse!

"Now, I should slap that temper out of her, if I had her," remarked Tom.

"No, you wouldn't," dissented newcomer number one.

"I should; and you into stayin' at home with the ugly little nuisance."

"She aint ugly," snapped the undaunted tongue.

"She is—she's as ugly as—as my grandmother."

At this astounding assertion both wee brothers ejaculated "Oh!" and Hoppity answered with mock indifference—

"That's all yer knows about it."

It truly was no fair specimen of babyhood; its cheeks were a trifle too hanging and flabby, its eyes of a pale, watery blue, its mouth not at all the cooing little rosebud such as rapturous mothers rejoice over. But then, its setting of garments was so poor and unbecoming; and fine feathers make fine birds, as all the world allows, so the truism ought to extend to babies.

"Binie, Binie," chirped the fond brother over the motherless wailer, while Tom disposed of his daffodils with the air of one who neither saw, heard, nor owned acquaintance with the bevy standing on his beat, as he termed the spot where they were.

"Well, I shall hook it, if this 'ere's to be the game every day," averred he, ungraciously enough, after a lady asked him, to his utter disgust, if those were his brothers and sister there.

"Well, I'm sorry to put yer out; still, this were my crossin' long afore yer took to it as yer corner; I'm a-thinking as 'twere I as interduced yer here," spoke Hoppity, with spirit. Then, shouldering his crutch as best he could with that refractory baby, who would persist in crying, giving the elder of the two wee laddies his broom, he beat a retreat to No. 9, top room, in Giles's Court, where they nestled, and called the poor place home.

"'Twere better in mother's days, and better still in father's days," often sighed Hoppity, with regret over their fallen fortunes, the burden and heat of which were well-nigh too much for him. Father's days were the happy dream-life spent in the country, before that mania seized the fickle bread-winner which sent him to town. Poor little Hoppity was Jemmy then, and the hurt to his poor twisted leg happened during the latter days of his stay there; that depressing sobriquet was what the city gave him, till his poor toiling mother called him by it, and almost forgot his other name.

"Well, father came up and got lost—mother never could find him, when she came after; and, whiles after, Binie was born—called Binie after a young lady mother knew in the country. Folks said 'twere Binie killed her—her and hard work—but 'tweren't that; 'twere her cryin' all night, and eatin' nothink in the day, as did it. Old Sally Green said 'twere like burnin' a candle at both ends, cryin' by night, and eatin' nothink by day; and that's why she went off so sudden. No, she weren't ill—but just pined a day or two, and then died.

"Mind and be honest, and not take nor keep what isn't your own, and mind and look to Binie and the laddies, and mind and say, "Our Father," mornin'

and night, 'cause He is your Father'—them's her last words."

Thus Hoppity was wont to tell the story of what had been in his life, his sweet gray eyes a marvel of tender, wistful lights. Times went "wrong" with him, he confessed, though, to one or two of his contemporaries in age and occupation. These three mites intrusted to him by his mother were a dead weight to his getting on in life, said the outside world, and advised him to consign them to the workhouse till times looked up a little.

"What! put little Binie, the *beautiful* little angel as ever wanted nursin', into the workhouse—no, not her, the Prairie Flower," was his protest.

Many an errand did Hoppity and his crutch run; ay, once and again he held a horse so carefully and well that the owner rewarded him with a double fee; and then he ran with "*newses*," as he said, "Oh! a Jack of all trades I be," he averred, with a blitheness which surely comes as a compensation to such weaklings as he.

Thus he fared, all through the first radiant summer-time of his hand-to-hand fight for his "little 'uns," as he called them. His needlework was his worst trouble, if anything relating to Binie and the boys were accounted as such by him. He was bound to keep his place at his crossing at times and seasons, or another would step into it; and a lucrative post it was, seeing clerks, "swells," and business men generally, came that way, he would have told you, and liked to go neat-footed to their offices. Well, he was obliged to be abroad, doing this and that, during the day; then there was washing and drying to be done of evenings—of course he was not an adept at clear-starching; still, he did what he could. But to patch and mend by the light of a dip candle, of an evening, was beyond his powers; it generally ended in his falling asleep, he, his work, and the candle coming to grief together, to the rousing up of Tod and Jep,

and that self-assertive small maiden, Binie. So, in the hot, fervid days of summer, he took his needlework with him to the crossing, with Binie and the two lads—the latter to catch the spirit of street-faring life.

"Well, Mother Hubbard, how's the cupboard gettin' on?" questioned that Tom whose speech began our story, one fair autumn morning, when the harvest of the sweeper was coming on, with cold nights and mornings, and radiance and hazy beauty holding sway in park, square, and even in grimy alley.

"Oh! that's all right, thank ye," spoke Hoppity, cheerily, stitching away at a nether garment of Tod's, Binie in his lap. A very refractory young damsel was she this morning, now reaching up for a handful of her nurse's hair, now cooing and trying to nibble the very needle in his deft fingers.

"'Tis all along of her teeth," explained Hoppity, as his friend laughed, and called her a young monkey.

"Why, ye're gettin' a real old 'oman, with yer sewin', and yer babies, and knowing all about teeth and that," was the boy's rather slighting remark.

"Well, a old 'oman aint half a bad thing," returned Hoppity.

"Well, I aint a lookin' to the bad or the good, I'm a lookin' at the fun of the thing—why, ye're the larfin' stock of the place," quoth Tom.

True; for a party of careless schoolboys were trooping past in hot haste at the moment, but found time to titter at our poor hero.

"Well, let them *larf* as loses; them as wins 'll be sure to *larf*; and I'm the winner, for 'twill save me a sight of expense a-sewin' the little 'uns' garments together."

Thus spoke the brave little heart; thus he felt—there are no limits to love, true love, such as his. He could but be cheerful, and hope that the winter fight for a living would not be harder than the sum-

mer fight had been. Ah, me! cold, wet, blustering days set in, quite a sweeper's harvest; but that little despot Binie would not be left within doors; if she were, she screamed herself ill, and her fat cheeks seemed to shrink away, her pale blue eyes, so beautiful to the brother, became leaden, —and, dear, dear! Tod and Jep owned to slapping her, she cried so. Thus, the

little bundle was all right—but, ah me! this life never was intended for babies; at any rate, it did not suit Binie. She caught a severe cold, which threatened hard to change to bronchitis; and so Hoppity found himself compelled to remain for hours together in the old garret, nursing her back to convalescence.

A whole week he was absent from his



"TO PATCH AND MEND WAS BEYOND HIS POWERS."

boy took her out, wrapped in the old shawl, and did his best to nurse and sweep too; perching her down, when his arms waxed too weary and aching for endurance, in his old corner, where he used to sit. Ay, once he left her there, when the funds were low, to run the length of the street on an errand, his heart quaking with fear all the time, lest on his return he should find the mite stolen. No, the

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crossing, and when, one wet, slushy day, he returned to it, from sheer starvation, lo! and behold! Tom was in his place and refused to abdicate. He even came to jostling poor, positive Hoppity, whom necessity would not allow to be vanquished and ousted thus; but a gentleman proved his champion, seeing how fast the lame boy was going to the wall.

"Come, hands off!" cried he, as Tom

sent Hoppity reeling. "What's the grievance?" And Hoppity told him.

"No, Master Tom, this is the other boy's crossing, by the right of long possession, and if you dare molest him, I'll call in the police to settle it," threatened he, giving Hoppity the accustomed penny and glancing back, when far up the street, to see how matters were standing.

"I'll be even with yer; I'll steal your precious Binie," was supplanter Tom's threat.

"No, no, yer won't," averred Hoppity, good-humoredly, "'cause yer wouldn't think her worth stealin', and I'd not mind so much givin' up to yer about the crossin', if 'tweren't for the starvin' little 'uns."

Hoppity was very downhearted to-day. Starvation is a most depressing evil, fight with it as he might, and, somehow, it was too wet for many passers by—luck seemed very far away. Toward evening an old gentleman passed, and as Hoppity touched his cap and waited, he drew from his pocket what he supposed to be a dime, and slipped it into the eager, grasping hands. Another step or two, and away he went in an omnibus, while Hoppity gazed, now at the coin, now at the whirling vehicle, like one moonstruck. Five dollars, and no mistake, was what the gentleman had given him. No more starvation with such a mine of wealth; firing through the winter, and, perhaps, boots for Tod and Jep; a weight, such as only the indigent can know of, seemed to drop from the boy's heart as he realized what he held in his possession. A few more pennies, and then his day's work was done. There were the items to purchase for the evening meal, and then away to Giles's Court.

Somehow, as he dived back into the dreary court, he fancied he heard his mother's voice say, as when she lay dying: "Be honest; never take nor keep what isn't your own," and instinctively Hoppity's fingers closed over the five dollars

deep down in his trousers' pocket. But this was his; the gentleman had given it to him; how was he to know he had made a mistake? So his poor craving heart answered that voice, the voice of his dead mother re-echoed by conscience, and hop—hop—hoppity—hop went his sounding crutch, while he struck up a blithe whistle. Ah! Hoppity, conscience is not thus whistled down.

After he had fed Binie and heard Tod and Jep say "Our Father," he tucked them up in their pallet bed, and he and conscience held parley together. It was a blustering, cold night, but the garret seemed stifling to Hoppity in his struggle, all that was good and noble rising up within him to combat what starvation tried to convince him was right. Eleven, twelve o'clock struck, out in the city, and still the knotty question was not settled—whose was the money, his or the gentleman's? Out into the windy court he went, round and round, in the slush and the gloom, and then the victory was gained, gained by looking up at the cloudy sky, for there, through a rift in the watery vapor, shone one little star, high up in those mysterious heights where he supposed his mother to be. It seemed that he heard her voice, thrilling with tears, as in the old days, and it said: "*Never, never take nor keep what isn't your own.*" Yes, the money was not his to keep; did mother know how near he was to doing it? It was all a mistake; it must be given up. Poor little Hoppity's hands were clammy with moisture, and beads of perspiration stood on his forehead as he spoke, "I will, mother," as to a living presence. Then the star passed under a cloud, the rain came down, and Hoppity stole back to his bed in the garret and sobbed himself to sleep, though the right had conquered.

—
"Well, what have yer lost, or what found—is it a serpent?" questioned Tom over Hoppity's shoulder, coming up just

as he had espied that careless gentleman of the evening before.

"No, 'twere a gentleman I see, as I wanted to give five dollars to," spoke unguarded Hoppity, like one in a dream.

"Ay; what's up?" queried Tom; and the other told him.

"No? Seein's believin'—let's see 'im," said wily Tom, when the budget was out, and Hoppity opened his hand.

"'Tis mine now," quoth that worthy, snatching it, and away he scudded, diving under horses' heads by the dozen, while the lame lad stood in a maze of misery.

Well, he was gone; he had fulfilled his threat of being even, and now the gentleman would never know but that Hoppity was as bad as a thief, and mother would never know that he intended to do the right. He might tell her all about it some day, if so be he ever found her in that very indistinct dream-world beyond the stars—but the time would be so long first. Very bitter tears did the boy shed that day, quiet, dreary tears, such as the aged shed, without rush, heat, or passion, by reason of the pressure of care and trouble on his poor little soul.

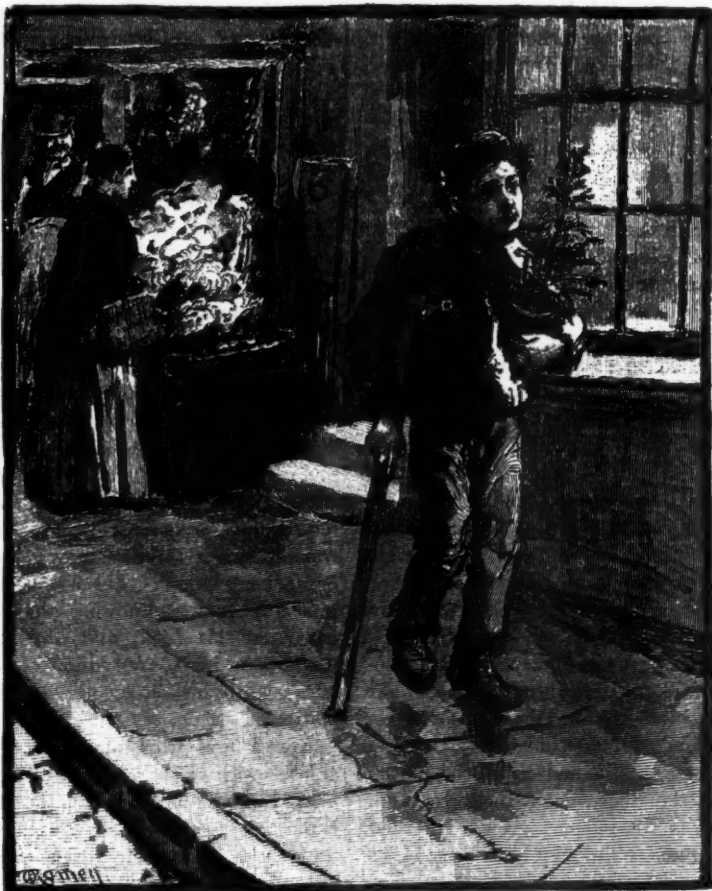
But, somehow, the pennies came in abundance on the next day, and the next, and the next, while the half-formed resolution awoke within him that he would save up and restore that unfortunate five dollars. Of one thing he was glad—once and again he had espied the gentleman, on the other side of the street, and, seeing him, his purpose grew. No need his going and telling him his story, and his intention; he would not believe him; but when he went with the money in his hand, then—ah! Hoppity's heart beat well-nigh to bursting at the thought of that supreme moment. But though the pennies came in, and fortune seemed to smile upon him from the day of Tom's escapade, it was hard work to hoard and save so much money. More, Hoppity had another dream—the boy's head was full of dreams and fancies—

he was bent on giving his "young 'uns" a Christmas-tree at Christmas, the same as he had espied through a window last Christmas, when Binie was a wee stranger among them, only a few days old. Yes, a Christmas-tree. "Only a tiny dot of a thing, 'cause we aint tip-toppers, and can't have tip-top things;" so he mused in his simple way, as the days went circling round toward Christmas—and he stinted and saved, well-nigh starving himself while his "little 'uns" had bread. His scanty clothing hung upon him in his thinness; his poor, wan face wore a pinched wistfulness sad to see; but his eyes were like summer stars, full of all tender, loving thoughts, going and coming, and living his noble life. A hacking cough harassed him, too—that was when the December days were flying apace, and the five dollars was complete. A shop round the corner had given him gold for his change, and now his Christmas store was growing fast. Oh! for the supreme moment for giving the gentleman back his own; but he never saw him now—no, not for days. As for Tom, a coolness had come between the two; they seldom met or spoke. Hoppity did not really bear him any malice, knowing that he was down on his luck, and almost starving, when he played him his wicked trick. Still, he felt a soreness about the matter.

Now it was Christmas Eve, the shops ablaze with light, Hoppity had had his "young 'uns" out all the day, for Binie was teething, and so pining that she would not be left to the tender mercies of Tod and Jep. So these young gentlemen took charge of her when Brother Hoppity could not. And anon it was evening, and Hoppity's Christmas store of money complete. He had bought a very uninteresting twig of a tree, the evening before, and planted it in an old jug without a handle. Now for the precious fruits—the pretty odds and ends, the sweetsies, the oranges, the tapers. The

Christmas fare, too, was to be purchased. The happy boy was almost sinking with weakness and weariness; his cough, too, exhausted him more; still, he went bravely trudging away to the shops he knew of, Binie tucked up in one arm and leaning

to her, in passing over his crossing, that very morning. But it was not likely he would see him, here in the network of streets he was now threading; he never had seen him here. The brave boy dived here and there, to buy this and that, the



"HE HAD BOUGHT A VERY UNINTERESTING TWIG OF A TREE."

over his shoulder, the boys close at his side. That money not his own was a burden to him. It seemed to burn a hole in his pocket. How he wished he could restore it this evening; it would be like a Christmas blessing to him, as he heard a happy girl say of something pleasant come

two laddies outside, Binie in his arms, too small to heed what he bought; he wanted to surprise them; his head was in a whirl with the gladness of his dream coming true.

"There, now, for the Christmas dinner and then home," said he, coming out of a

sweet-shop, to the two laddies who waited outside.

Ah! there was his gentleman, the owner of the five dollars, across the street, a stream of cabs and carriages between them.

"Here, Tod, stand here, you two, and mind Binie," said he, thrusting that cold-fisted young damsel into the boy's arms; and pushing the three into a recess by a doorway, he darted away.

Surely he was Hoppity to-night, leaping, bending, and bobbing, in and out among the horses, the money in his hand.

But he never reached the other side; he and his crutch were down together, knocked down by a cab. A policeman snatched him from death, but it was a poor, maimed little mite they placed on a shutter, a crowd gathering to peep and wonder.

"And what has he in his hand?" asked one.

"That's my five dollars, as isn't mine, but a gentleman's, as I thought I see," panted the suffering child; "don't take it from me."

"Give it to me, my boy; 'twill be safe with me," said a policeman, and the weary little fingers yielded it up.

One face peered down on him, which he knew, ere they bore him away—it was that of pilferer Tom.

"Why, if it aint poor Hoppity!" cried he, in genuine pity.

"Ay, it's me, Tom," replied Hoppity.

"What can I do for yer? They're sayin' ye're done to death," blurted out Tom.

"Death means goin' to mother; perhaps that's my Christmas blessin'; and—and not—"

The child was growing faint.

"What can I do for yer, old chap? I'll do it, right out, and not rob yer, as I did last time," whispered Tom.

"The little 'uns are over yonder, Tom; take 'em home, and don't let 'em starve wi'out me—and, Tom, they were to have had a Christmas-tree—"

A smile broke over the wan little face ah! that cough, how it harassed him.

"Ay, I'll see to 'em, never fear, old chap," was the last the boy heard, for they bore him away to the hospital.

"To which 'un, I'd like to know?" said poor Tom.

"St. Thomas's—it lies—" began a policeman.

"Ay, I knows where it lies." Then Tom went across to the desolate "little 'uns," in their lonely corner, and took them home.

The bells rang out their happy Christmas song. Hoppity heard them as he lay on his clean, comfortable hospital bed, comfortable save for the pain, which no bed could ease. They had set his leg, that poor, twisted, contracted leg, which had been of so little use before, and had bound up his head. No, he was not delirious, but he kept whispering.

"Well, this be a queer Christmas blessin', it be; and yet if it carries me home to mother, 'twill be all right—only there'll be the little 'uns; they'll want me," the nurse heard him say once.

They had found his pockets stuffed with sweeties—the very tapers were there.

"Who are the 'little 'uns'?" asked the kindly woman.

"Tod and Jep and Binie, as mother left me to mind when she died."

"And were the goodies you had in your pockets for them?"

"Yes, for their Christmas-tree"—a wan smile came with the words. "Now they'll never know, when I'm dead." The smile was gone now.

"Dead, my boy! Who talks of dying?" It was a new doctor come to look at him.

"Why—why—why—" Hoppity tried to start up in bed, but pain kept him prone. That was the old gentleman who had given him the five dollars by mistake. Hoppity would have told him so, only he laid his finger on the child's lips.

"No, not to-night, my boy, no talking

to-night." So he hushed him, and gave him a sedative draught, and when he awoke therefrom it was Christmas morning.

But anon the good doctor heard his story, and Hoppity heard his in return—that with skill and patience, the boy's maimed leg, now injured anew, could be brought into use, and that he intended to try and do it.

Before the day was gone Tom came, and reported the "little 'uns" all right. Then Hoppity intrusted him to take home the things for the Christmas-tree, decorate it, and set it alight; he also gave him a mite of money to buy a Christmas treat, and Tom humbly carried it out to the letter. Poor, faulty Tom, with a kindly heart hidden under the

ignorance and sin which were his heritage.

So, this was Hoppity's Christmas blessing, to lie long weeks in a hospital, away from his "little 'uns," and to go out, Hoppity no longer, but Jemmy Brown, without his cough, without his crutch. His shoulder was deformed, his frame weakly.

"But you'll grow out of that," quoth the good doctor, the donor of the five dollars, the donor of a new life for Hoppity and his "little 'uns" in the country—Hoppity as serving-boy, the "little 'uns" in a charity school hard by.

Tom took to Hoppity's broom, his crossing, and his honesty—so who shall say that Hoppity's Christmas blessing was not Tom's as well?

A PENNY BOTTLE OF INK.

IT is a wet and windy day, cold and cheerless, during the season that is known in England as summer. We have called for paper, pen, and ink. Even the landlady of the lodgings has admitted her poverty in this particular, and the domestic has been dispatched through the rain to the nearest stationer's; and she has returned with a small bottle of ink and a pen and holder, for which she has laid out one penny.

The letter is written, and lies ready to be dispatched. As the rain continues to fall, the recent purchase comes under notice. A penny bottle of ink! There can be nothing remarkable in so commonplace an article. Have we not seen them in the stationers' shops, heaped together in the corner of the window or on a back shelf—rough, dingy, uninviting objects! Why waste a moment of time or a passing thought over such merchandise? But the rain keeps us within doors, and affords an excuse, in the absence of other amuse-

ment, for turning to this humble penny-worth.

Whatever else it may be, it cannot with justice be classed as a dear purchase. The shopkeeper presumably made a profit on the sale, the manufacturer also benefited, and most likely there was a middleman, who has not gone unrewarded. It would appear that our purchase of this small bottle has assured a monetary profit to two, if not three, tradesmen. When we come to think of it, there must be many others who have shared in our penny. When examined in order, we find: The bottle; the ink, black and fluid, and exceedingly pleasant for writing; a cork, sealed with wax; a printed label, covering a slot in the bottle, in which rests a wooden penholder, containing a good steel nib. Thus we have six articles, each one from a different source, brought together and retailed for one penny. How can it be done for the money? Perhaps, if we examine still closer, we may

get some insight into the secret, though to fathom it completely must necessarily be beyond us.

The glass of the bottle is of the cheapest quality. It is evidently made of "cullet"—a technical term for broken windows, tumblers, bottles, and every description of fractured glass. The molds have taxed a more than ordinary intelligence. It needs a rare mechanical mind to produce even a common bottle mold. The pattern-maker, the iron-founder, and the mechanic who finishes the rough castings, have all brought their special tact and knowledge to bear before a single bottle could be produced.

Next, the ink. The "unspeakable Turks" have stripped their oak-trees of the gall-nuts, of which all black inks worthy the name are made; the hardy north-countrymen on the Tyne have furnished the best copperas; there are brokers, dealers, and drysalters, with their clerks, porters, and the dock laborers; there are the chemist, who blends the chemicals, and the ink-boilers, who have made the ink; there are the men, boys, or girls who pour it into these small bottles and in other ways prepare it for sale—every one of whom has had a portion of our penny.

The cork is so small as almost to escape notice. Workmen have stripped the bark from the cork tree, after ten years' growth; other brokers have sold it at public auction; the skillful cutter has shaped it with his sharp knife—and all these have found their reward in a portion of our penny.

If the cork was small, what shall be said of the seal upon it? In this minute dab of wax we have rosin from America, shellac from India, a pigment for color, and other ingredients known only in the mystery of wax-making. These—not forgetting the manipulator's wages—have all been paid out of our penny.

The label suggests the paper-makers, and we might go further back to the type-

founder and compositor, the printer and the cutter-out and gluer, each one participating in our penny.

Now for the pen and the holder. There is a handle of hard wood, a tip to hold a pen, and a steel nib. It would be hard to say where the wood came from—probably from Norway—or to conjecture through how many hands it passed before reaching the shaping-machine, a beautifully constructed piece of mechanism, that splits and fashions it into its present polished cylindrical shape. The tip, or holder, has engaged the skill and intelligence of a tool-maker, who has designed cutters to pierce the soft sheet steel, and other tools to bring it to its proper form—possibly through some half-a-dozen processes in heavy and costly presses. The steel itself has passed through many hands before reaching these artificers, and on leaving, passes through others to be hardened. The nib also owes its existence to the united labors of a similar army of workers—and all these, every one, has had a portion of our penny.

Though the portion claimed by each of the workers concerned in this bottle of ink must be exceedingly minute, the fact remains—the penny has paid them all. "It is the quantity that pays;" yet that which rules a thousand gross, regulates in its degree the single bottle drawn from the bulk. How many profits can our penny have paid? From first to last, here, there, everywhere, all over the world, are the workers, direct and indirect, without whom our penny bottle of ink could not be. Who shall number them?

The rain is over, the sky is clearing; let us to the sands! Stay! Take care of our purchase. Give it a place of honor on the mantel-shelf. It deserves some consideration. Has it not beguiled a half hour that might have been tedious? And it may be we, in our turn, have found one more profit in our penny.

—*Chambers's Journal.*



FIR CONES.

THE STORY OF LYDIA.

BY

FRANCES RUEL WENTWORTH.

CHAPTER IV.

"I HAVE always wanted to help my 'mother," Lydia had said to Squire Reid when he was pursuing his vehement courtship.

"An' how can you help her better than by marryin' me?" he urged. "I'm jus' the one to help people in a pinch—been mighty poor myself, an' know how it is. You can help her all you want 'o."

"He says I may help you," she sobbed, burying her face in her mother's bosom when she told of her final decision.

"I—hope," faltered the mother, "that—that did not influence you. Think only of yourself."

But she had thought much of her mother before the final decision, during the hasty preparations that preceded the wedding, when everything seemed to her as unreal as a dream—a terrible dream from which she wished to waken—and also when the sense of dreadful reality had forced itself upon her, and prison walls seemed closing about her. "At least I shall be able to help her," she had whispered to her wounded heart, crying out against its wrongs.

"What did you git a black dress fur?" her husband asked, as they returned from their first shopping expedition. "I tole you to git a fine dress. I want you to dress fine, but I don't like to see you in black."

"I got it for mother—I don't need a new dress."

"Your mother! by doggies! See here, Liddy, I aint a goin' to have any o' that sort o' thing."

"You said I might help her." Her tears were falling fast.

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"Help her!" he exclaimed, in astonishment. "I don't call it helpin' people to give 'em fine black dresses. No, I don't. My ide o' helpin' is when they've got their shoulders to the wheel, an' workin' real hard (he began gesticulating), then jes' len' a han'; give it a shove to start it a goin'. You can give her this, 'cause I don't want to see you in black, but it's the last, *min'*. There aint no use, any way, in your folks bein' so poor. Ef they'd knuckle down an' work 's I used to, they'd git 'long all right. Ef your ma's ever in a pinch an' doin' her best I'll help her. La! to think o' all the good lan' your ma's got—mighty pity it's in 'mong them fly-up-the-cricks that don't know nothin'." And he spent the rest of the time during the long ride home in telling her how the land should be managed to secure large returns.

As Lydia threw the bundle containing the black dress wearily down, she murmured something to herself in the twilight shadows about dreams that were only dreams. She had no time to sit down and grieve over her lost dreams, she must hasten to skim the milk and prepare for the milk-straining; and mingled with the pain that followed her as she went about her work was the remembrance of the smirking, amused glances of the clerks in the large dry goods establishment when her husband introduced his young wife. She felt indignant, and yet half amused, for how could the silly creatures help thinking the marriage a strange one, and drawing their own conclusions about it? It was, she supposed, a part of what she must learn to endure. The black dress entered so often into the harangues that

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Lydia received as a part of her training, that it began to seem to her a pall, and she the corpse beneath it.

In the exalted feeling of self-sacrifice that had come with the fatal decision, the thought that she could be a mother to the motherless children had been one of Lydia's most cherished thoughts. When the Squire almost on his bended knees had begged her to be his bride, he grew eloquent over the children that would be hers, and this especially when he spoke of his boy.

Once for all he had told his children that perfect obedience must be given to the beautiful new mother he had brought them. Certainly no step-mother ever entered upon her duties with better intentions than did Lydia, and yet how could she help that pang, a sort of jealous distrust, when she looked at the beautiful boy, so grave and un-boy like? She knew that Alfred was his father's idol, that to him he represented the superior woman that preceded her—that other "Liddy," whose praises wearied her, and to whose eulogy was often added:

"An' Fred, he's jus' like her—got her min', an' jes' her own sweet looks."

Lydia tried to love him; her conscience troubled her because she felt so little real interest in him; her nature was too noble to cherish the jealous distrust, and yet the feeling remained.

She felt far more tender toward the girl, with her unhappy face, even though the glances of the dark eyes were far from encouraging tenderness, even though Julia, with her quick, graceful movements, seemed always trying to escape her. Had their relations been less close, perhaps Lydia would have won her affection, for poor little Julia's heart was full of pent-up tenderness. She was much like her father in disposition—had much of his practical ability and something of his hardness—but the unhappy, dissatisfied look on her face came from a finer fibre than his nature knew. She seemed even

in childhood to have a woman's power of suffering through her affections. She was painfully conscious of her inferiority to her brother and of her lack of beauty. When only six years old she attended the country school with her brother. One evening she loitered behind the hedgerows hunting for birds' nests, that she might have something to show her brother when they next came to school. The osage-orange hedge, with its thick, shining green leaves, was the home of many happy birds, and they were keeping count of all they could find. She was very still, watching and waiting for a bird to dart in, then creeping up cautiously to see just where the nest was and what kind of a bird it was.

Suddenly she heard voices on the other side of the hedge, and recognized them as those of two girls much older than herself (to her they seemed grown up) for whom she cherished a childish adoration.

"Who would think the Reid boy and girl was any kin?"

"I should think not; she looks like a nigger, and a perfect spitfire when she's mad."

Poor Julia pressed her hands over her mouth, too much stunned at first either for anger or tears. It is marvelous how a child can suffer! We talk of the evanescent griefs of childhood. True, there is an element of unconsciousness in it (as, indeed, there is in all grief), but childish grief particularly does not know itself—cannot measure its own depth—and when later in life self-consciousness comes, we rarely have the power to recall the keenness of those early sufferings.

When Julia sufficiently recovered from the shock, she slipped from behind the hedge and went home sobbing, and intending to tell her mother. But her mother was gone, the house was still, and before she saw any one she had time to think. Was it not all true? Her brother was pretty and good; she was neither. She put her hand on the ugly scar and re-

membered that it came from disobedience and impatience—because she would not wait. But then she would be ugly without the scar. To what a dreadful thing they had likened her. She had never seen but one of that Pariah race. Did she indeed look like that? She went to sleep on the hard floor, but wakened in the night to find herself in her own little bed, and at once recalled the cruel words. All was still around her save the occasional stamping of the horses in the stable near by. She wished they were trampling her under their feet.

After much brooding over her deep hurt she concluded to tell no one, and for a long time she cherished her wound, avoided companionships, and was on constant lookout for kindred insults. And never throughout her life could she see happy birds fluttering over green hedges without a memory of the early pain.

Julia learned quickly, but had no love for books or study in themselves; lessons were only so much work to be done quickly and well. She was industrious and very practical, as unchildlike in her way as was her brother. She early displayed an aptness in household duties that pleased her father exceedingly, and he grew into the habit of calling her his "little woman," and talking to her as he might have talked to one much older.

Lydia really liked Julia very much at first and hoped for a return of affection, but for many reasons they came to no understanding—no mutual regard. In time, and the time was not long, Lydia gave up all thought of affection between herself and the children, and tried only to perform conscientiously the known duties of a mother, seeming to see before her a martyrdom, with no martyr-like compensation.

The children were as the Squire had represented them, unusually good children, and whatever other cause of complaint Lydia may have had, there

certainly could be no complaint of lack of obedience and respect on the part of the children. The Squire himself might storm and scold, might harangue for weary hours the woman he could not control, but the children must obey and bring him no complaints.

CHAPTER V.

SQUIRE REID thought he understood things generally pretty well, and had in his own mind a satisfactory philosophy of life and convenient categories in which he placed those who came under his observation. He thought he knew by little signs when people had "git up" about them, who were "shiftless" or "doless," and never would amount to anything; who had "brains that were going to tell;" who were "edicated dunces;" who were so mean that "you could put their souls on the pint of a needle an' leave a plenty o' room to dance roun';" and so on through sharply drawn, limited lines he classed people, or, as he called it, "set them down," but he could not class his wife. She was an unknown, puzzling quantity, often hinting vaguely to him some complex deep below deep of his hitherto simple classes, some perversity of will for which the holder was not wholly accountable, some hereditary fatality; for though he called it by a different name, the Squire was very strong on heredity. In her case he had been attracted by a little sign; she was good and kind; he had classed her thus and taken everything else for granted; he still held to his first conviction; but then, he said to himself, it was "sich quare kind o' goodness; it was all spiled in the way it was worked out."

He soon found that the fair young girl whom he had expected to train to his own liking, and at the same time win her affection, could, without any violence of temper, be more profoundly exasperating than he had supposed it possible for any one to be. In the constant discords that rose

while he was still hoping that things might turn out well, he often mused about her, sitting with his arms drawn over his knees. The discords that rose from housekeeping would come first to his mind. What was the reason that she could not use her head about things? She certainly did not lack brains. Why did she do everything at the wrong time and in the wrong way? Why would she so manage about the bread-baking that she turned night into day and day into night? Why, when he gave her money to hire the washing, did she wash out a few pieces every day and then try to iron them all Saturday night? Why did she drag the housecleaning through the year and keep a room torn up for a week? Why did she spend all her time and strength on something that was not needed and neglect things that must be done? Why did she neglect all the sewing for that embroidered skirt for Julia's birthday present? And why, when he told her over and over again how things should be done, nay, how they *must* be done, why did she answer him only with tears, and still go on in her own way? He had no intention of being hard on her; his "other Liddy" had never seemed to think for a moment that her lot was not an enviable one. Already he had made many concessions; he had told her that she might hire all the work she wanted to, and at her suggestion they had offered to Kitty Sutton, Lydia's orphan cousin, a home, with the hope that the domestic machinery would run more smoothly; but things had been no better, and it was not Kitty's fault; the poor girl had red eyes half the time, and now she was going away without giving any reason; but he knew what the reasons were and could not blame her. The details of the housekeeping annoyances that came to his mind were numerous and were certainly sufficiently perplexing.

But that which puzzled him even more was the unexpected way she had of thwarting him, of having her own way

about things, and the certainty that he began to feel that nothing that he said had any real effect on her. He was fond of giving advice to young people and had a vehement way of talking and gesticulating; he liked to carry conviction and feel the influence of what he was saying. He remembered with pride that in more than one close election he had been asked by leaders of his party to use his influence with doubtful voters, and that his persuasive and convincing power had succeeded at least so far as what he considered correct voting; but his eloquence, vehemence, and even the boisterous mirth by which he sometimes tried to enforce his lessons seemed to him in his wife's case "jes' like pourin' water on a duck's back." Sometimes when he had exhausted himself in his efforts first to control his wife and then in trying to account to himself for his failure, he would think perhaps, after all, she "wa'n't quite right in her min'"; this would explain things, if it did not help matters.

Lydia's character certainly was not symmetrical, and it was not strange that her husband could not understand her. Not only was her nature one of delicate, sensitive shadings, of desires and aspirations that he could know little about, but it was also a complex, contradictory character. There was native strength of character, but it had hitherto been almost wholly undisciplined. The strongest desire of her heart had long been to do good, and in her mother's home it had often seemed the proper thing to neglect disagreeable home duties and follow her impulses for doing good in other directions.

She had high ideals of right and duty and but little power in properly adjusting conflicting duties. This same lack of power to adjust things rightly seemed to affect, in greater or less degree, all that she did, and to be the black vein of destiny in her character, often thwarting and misleading her best intentions and giving rise to manifold vexations.

Her new life proved a discipline to her in the very point where discipline was most needed; but no smooth-sounding names have power to make suffering seem, at the time being, other than grievous. The heart only knows that it suffers, and cries out for relief.

Lydia's disappointments came thick and fast about her, and among them was the disappointment in regard to housekeeping; indeed, in that respect there was some disappointment to begin with. True, her home was one of luxury compared to the one she had left, but it was much plainer than she had expected from her husband's description. She had spent a year with a wealthy uncle in Cincinnati, and though it had been a year of great pain, owing to the circumstances that had caused the visit and to her inability to please her fashionable aunt, still, it had given her a knowledge of the pleasures that come from wealth and refinement, and had made the poverty of her home far less endurable. She had always longed for a life of beauty and ease. In her girlish dreams, before the one dream came, poverty had only seemed endurable as the wife of a minister, braving difficulties for the high needs of the spirit, or, best of all, a missionary's wife, carrying the everlasting truth to darkened lands.

Everywhere in her new home there was abundance of material good, but there was certainly little to satisfy the needs of the spirit in the large frame house, with its white, unadorned walls, and stiff, comfortless furniture. There was scarcely a hint of the beauty she desired, but this she thought could be remedied, and the home made beautiful and attractive. Had she been a woman of tact, and one who had married simply for wealth, she might have gradually brought about changes and made her home something of what she had hoped to find it; but when her slightest suggestions of change were met with rasping opposition, she yielded the point, and the house soon came to seem to

her far more a prison than a home. Weary hours of homesickness and heart-sickness beset her, and she often closed her eyes at night wishing she might waken up somewhere else—anywhere else—for she could not believe that the wide world held so intolerable a lot as hers.

And this indifference to her home was another thing that puzzled her husband.

The Squire loved his farm; it represented to him the hopes and achievements of his hard life; it was his world, not only his good in a worldly sense, but it was hallowed with the association of family affection. His heart seemed to have taken as deep root in the soil as had the trees that he had planted, and that now spread their broad branches and offered him the solace of their rich fruits and grateful shade. How could his wife care so little for his beautiful home, and nothing at all for the increase of wealth? It seemed to him that he had done and was doing his part. Certainly, if Lydia failed to give satisfaction in housekeeping matters and general conduct, it was not for the lack of oft-repeated lectures as to how things should be done, given at first with patience and gentleness, but gradually losing these qualities as it began to seem to him utterly impossible for her to learn what was expected of the mistress of a large farm. He had warned her once that he might "git mad," and that that might be dangerous, and there were a few conjugal storms that seemed to Lydia enough to take the roof off the house before he gave up the struggle or accepted the inevitable.

It was long before the gentle voice and winning smile that came when she was pleased ceased to charm him, but the time came.

The hasty flame that he had supposed was love died out; he ceased trying to make her happy, and seemed to forget that he had ever wished for anything but an able and willing housekeeper, a practical farmer's wife, and felt that in these things

he had been grievously disappointed. He became hard, exacting, and uncompromising when he had intended to be kind and generous. In his gentler moments he still fell back on his first conviction, and comforted himself with the thought that she was good and conscientiously cared for his children—he might, yes, he might have done worse.

The children certainly had no other causes of complaint than those which came from the constant vexations arising from the extraordinary methods of domestic procedure, which, in Julia's case, at least, were very trying. Julia was naturally quick and able in household matters, and had the power, even when a little child, of making Lydia feel very uncomfortable, as with a sly, half-amused look, she obeyed commands that seemed only to add to the generally chaotic state of things. Lydia was always glad when school was in session, and the eyes that seemed to have such critical power were otherwise engaged than in watching her.

These small vexations became less and less endurable as Julia grew older, wearing on a temper naturally quick and impatient, and she sometimes had passionate outbreaks, during which she would declare, even while obeying commands, that they were senseless. But these outbreaks would be met either with provoking coolness or smiles, and the punishment would be some unexpected pleasure, some unlooked-for generosity, calculated to fill her with shame, and yet increase the general dissatisfaction.

CHAPTER VI.

IN those days when the Squire sat with his hands drawn over his knees, considering his own spotless conduct and his wife's general perverseness, things seemed very different to Lydia. She had yielded all hope of anything pleasant in regard to the ill-starred marriage, except the satisfaction that might come from bravely

bearing the consequences of her rash act, an act that at times seemed to her sinful, and her punishment, however severe, only a just infliction for wrong-doing. She could still do right, perform her duties conscientiously—God would surely give her strength for this—and when she was haunted with a memory of her old dreams she remembered that in them she had considered herself equal to hard things, for she belonged to that large class of whom it may be said that many are called but few are chosen; she had known many aspirations, but lacked the will and perseverance that at least deserves success. Her course was now defined for her, and there was no vagueness in the demands made; she would try to meet them bravely.

The troubles about the housekeeping did not arise, as her husband sometimes thought they did, from an unwillingness on her part, but rather from a constitutional inability to seize and group the whole and give each part its due importance. Things must be done well, she thought, and was quite literal in working out the proverb that "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well." There were times when, suffering keenly from the mortification of her failures, she felt willing to be what her husband wished her to be, and nothing more; times when, crying over the poor bread, she thought she would be willing not to know how to write her own name if she only could make good bread. But she could not always cry. She felt that she was indeed growing hardened when she could listen almost unmoved, only with a dull, heavy pain, while her husband would say, in the days when his patience was ebbing away:

"By doggies! Liddy, why don't you use your head? Can't you think things out? What would you think o' me ef I plowed in spring, planted when frost come, and expected corn nex' spring? That's just the way you manage."

The word "manage" grew hateful to her ears, even while she was trying to compass the wisdom that it seemed to indicate.

And then she did think things out; she seemed to have deep-laid plans as to how and when things should be done, and worked fitfully toward far-reaching ends in housekeeping, but as she never could or would impart these plans to any one, things moved lamely, no matter how much assistance she had.

"If I were not in such a hard place," she would sometimes sigh, knowing as little as we are apt to know when we are suffering that these hard places, these difficult circumstances, are often the only strong teacher that can lead aright. At best, the life of a farmer's wife on a large Western farm is very hard. If she be strong, quick, and deft in household matters, with few ambitions beyond housekeeping, she may have much visiting and receiving of visits, and all the pleasure that comes from the display of fine living, but she must herself be able and willing to work, for often servants cannot be procured—the isolation of the farm is more than they are willing to endure. The simplicities of country life are here unknown, and often there are the inconveniences of both town and country life and the pleasures of neither. To Lydia the whole thing soon grew to seem an intolerable burden, but the greatest terror of all was the terror of having company.

The good ladies of Fairview were noted for their excellent housekeeping, and kept a sharp lookout for any delinquents in that line. Lydia for a long time lived in constant terror of them, and with the best of intentions seemed utterly unable to learn that beautiful art of housekeeping, that made them so triumphant, so self-satisfied.

Oh! the dreadful vexations of those early efforts at housekeeping! How often it seemed to her that she would sink into the floor when her nearest neighbor, Mrs.

Shore, would come bustling in, and without knocking would make her way to the disorderly kitchen.

"Good-morning, Liddy—excuse me for calling you Liddy, always called *her* so, too—won't come in, haven't time to stay, just came over on an errand," meanwhile her eyes would rest on the unwashed breakfast dishes, and her sweeping glance seemed to take in the whole situation. "I've been going ever since five this morning; done all my work, and baked six loaves of the loveliest bread, made a cup cake, and some pies. I'm going to try a new *receipt* I got for a cake to-morrow; wouldn't you like to have it? five eggs, two cups of sugar—but I guess I'll try it first myself," and so she would continue talking, while Lydia would stand with a perplexed look on her face, wishing she could spread herself out so as to hide something from the inquisitive gaze. "Had to do my washing on Monday. Mollie sent word she was sick, and couldn't come before Wednesday, but I can't let washing go over Monday—got it all out before twelve—I was awful tired; fact is, I'm killing myself with hard work; if Charlie Shore isn't a rich man some day it won't be his wife's fault. Do come over and see me—going to have my first fried chicken for supper."

And the little, busy, bustling, brown-eyed woman would hasten on her way, pitying the dreadful state of affairs that she had seen.

No, certainly, if Mrs. Shore's husband was not a rich man, it would not be his wife's fault, for that was her aim and ambition. Her eagerness for wealth, her desire to be fashionable, "up to the latest style" in everything, her obsequiousness to the families of the great landholders, her determination to enter their familiar circles, made her the object of much derision on the part of those who, without knowing it, were much like her.

She never met Lydia or any of her neighbors without recounting some of her

wonderful housekeeping feats; and, so far as Lydia's knowledge went, her words seemed to tell only half the truth. How she could do all she did with three pretty, bright-eyed children about her—the children so prettily dressed and well behaved—caused astonishment to any one who looked into the matter.

Sometimes after one of these friendly calls Lydia would sit down and wring her hands in anguish.

"She will think—how can she help thinking?—that it's because I haven't been used to anything, and it isn't that. I know how things ought to be done; I don't suppose she was ever in as fine a house as Uncle Mark's, where I lived a year; and I have never said a word to her about it; she would talk about such a thing all the time. But this isn't getting the work done," and she would address herself wearily to her Herculean tasks.

Lydia was soon set down by the neighbors as being unaccountably "queer." She rarely returned their visits, because she did not feel equal to getting up entertainments quickly, and found no pleasure in such a life. This displeased her husband; the household supply was abundant and he was very hospitable. There were times when she made great exertions and acquitted herself well in the task of entertaining, but then it was such hard and unsatisfactory work, and there was so much else to be done, and what was the use of trying to do as her neighbors did? She never could come up to her husband's expectations, and she began to adjust herself as well as she could to the ceaseless round of things that must be done, seeking only a little peace with herself for the accomplishment of known duties.

Usually Squire Reid was quite reticent, for him, about his domestic affairs, but in the third year of their marriage an incident occurred that hurt him so much that he made little effort to conceal his anger and chagrin about it.

Lydia failed to deliver a message to him,

and by that failure he lost the opportunity of an advantageous sale of some cattle—lost, indeed, beyond hope of recall, some hundreds of dollars. Few could have been patient under like circumstances, but to one who cared for money as Squire Reid cared for it the forgetfulness seemed unpardonable. The story was soon noised about, and people shook their heads gravely as they repeated it. Poor Lydia felt the hot blushes come and go as he talked in his nagging way about it. It was dreadful; she knew it, and did not try to excuse it.

And yet if he knew; if he only could understand what that day had been to her; for the day of the fatal forgetfulness the mail had brought her a package of old letters, a tress of her own brown hair, and a message that he whom she had loved was dead; and dying remembered her—her to whom he had been faithful. She had wiped away the hot, grateful tears, the first tears she had shed for many months, to answer the loud rap at the door, and stood with quivering lips and down-cast eyes while the burly, red-faced man, with whip in hand, scanned her with his sharp eyes, and, without removing his slouch hat, had delivered the message to be repeated to her husband.

She remembered it all afterward, but then it slipped away, hidden beneath the torrent of grief and self-reproach that had seized her and seemed battling for her very life. How could she—oh! how could she—offer this sacred grief as excuse for her fault?—offer it to have it spurned with scorn and profane laughter? No, no! she would rather suffer and deaden the pain of hidden self-reproach for one who had died faithful by the bitter, scathing reproaches of one who held her by external bonds and taunted her with poor performance of known duties.

She was a believer in the doctrine of special Providence, and as she silently suffered and considered, she sometimes thought perhaps she needed

this quick punishment for yielding to the weak cries of her heart, that the sudden and complete forgetfulness had been a special act of Providence—a chastisement for sin.

The startled look with which strangers sometimes said to Lydia, "Your husband? I thought he was your father!" told not only of surprise, but of pity. For to a dispassionate observer there was something pitiful in the thought of one so young, so apparently sweet and gentle, being the wife of one who seemed to have age without its redeeming graces, seemed in every way so unsuited to be trusted with her happiness. The first impression that Lydia gave was always pleasant. There always remained about her, even during the period of her deepest distress, something so very winning, something that spoke of unusual goodness, that even those who made themselves merry over her "queerness," usually felt bound to add that she was "good."

She was certainly good! The poor Irish women in the tenant-cabins nursing their sick children could tell of her goodness; outcasts from society blessed her name; and few ever tried harder than she to conceal from the left hand what the right hand did.

CHAPTER VII.

ONE of the many differences between Lydia and her husband was in regard to her dress. He was proud of his young wife and wished her to dress well. She dressed plainly, at times bordering on the shabby. It was not that she lacked a woman's instinct in regard to dress, but was rather the result of the pain that came from the thought that her marriage was considered mercenary. She did not wish her lot to seem desirable—nor to seem largely indebted to the man whose name she bore; the plainness was also partly due to the literal rendering of St. Paul's advice on the subject of dress.

The country church, with its seats all facing the two doors, at one of which the women entered, the other the men, was a very useful place for displaying fine clothes. Indeed, to a cynical observer, noticing the many not always silent sleepers on a warm summer's day, it might seem its chief use. Entering this church was a terrible ordeal for poor Lydia. She well remembered the first time she entered that the many curious eyes seemed to say, "Sold," "Sold."

As the circle, the round of circumstances, in which Lydia found herself narrowed, the illusions faded, and even the power of suffering became somewhat deadened, she sought more and more the consolation of religion, thankful, deeply thankful, that there was One who knew all and would be both just and merciful.

At first she had hoped that her earnest endeavor for a deeper consciousness of that Divine favor, that assurance of salvation which she had long sought, might bring her some companionship, for there were times when her heart failed her from utter loneliness, times when her soul seemed perishing for its proper food.

But the religion of those around her seemed to her wholly external, a semi-pagan conformation to the respectabilities of religion.

The rich farmers and their families attended the little country church quite regularly. They came in their fine carriages, their wives and daughters dressed as nearly as possible in the "latest style." Their pride of life did not, in those days, extend to the architecture and adornment of the church, and there was always some difficulty in paying the minister's very moderate salary.

But then he was one of them—a landowner and a farmer by proxy—a man whose upright life and good deeds seemed to many people an atonement for the poor quality of his preaching. He understood his people, loved them, and seemed satisfied with them.

He treated Lydia with such fatherly kindness that she hoped for spiritual help from him, and during one of his friendly calls ventured to say—

"Don't you think there is such a thing as entire consecration—sanctification?"

He almost frowned as he said—

"Entire consecration, of course—that is what union with the Church means; but sanctification—that is fanaticism."

And she was forced to listen to a long doctrinal discourse that made no impression, when she had hoped for encouragement and words of consolation.

"Like priest, like people." The worshippers on Sabbath could sing in their most lugubrious manner,

"Oh! for a closer walk with God," but any talk of that closer walk Lydia soon found was very distasteful to them—deepening their impression of her "queerness."

The church was three miles from the Reid farm, and the ride there in summer was one of enchanting loveliness. The long stretches of gently rolling land, the fruitful fields with their varying greens, the rich meadows where grazed the fine cattle so celebrated in that region, formed a picture to be cherished by all true lovers of nature. But the beauty made little impression on Lydia.

The rich fields often only deepened her sense of weariness and recalled only too vividly the burdens she was bearing, and which, on Sundays at least, she wished to forget. A thrill of freedom often came as they entered the beautiful woods, in whose depths the church was standing. She often then recalled the lines, beginning—

"The groves were God's first temples."

She had learned them in a school book in that far-off, happy time when poverty was her greatest misery. She was fast forgetting the things she had read and admired then, and there was no time now for any reading, save in one Book, and in that she often found herself turning to the prayer of Hannah, for that, too, was her

prayer, and its denial another of the many bitter things hugged closely to heart with pitying self-compassion.

She felt instinctively that the unhappy marriage might in part be atoned through the priceless gift of motherhood.

Sometimes as they rode to church the Squire would rein his horses at the roadside and expatiate on the beauties of "them fine cattle," wading in all their sleek, well-fed beauty through the sweet, clover-gemmed grass, and if among them there were fine milch cows of some of late imported breed, he would discuss their many fine points, and this only recalled to Lydia the endless churning and butter-making that must go on. She remembered now, with a grim smile at the depths to which she had fallen, that even the season of fruit bloom, the year's supreme moment of youth, when the heart should forget its age and its sorrows, and which linked itself with sacred memories of that early and hopeless love, brought now with its song of rejoicing an under refrain, and, indeed, a loud refrain, of laborious drying, canning, preserving.

One Sunday morning, when the Squire paused to look at and talk of the cattle, she said, very gently—she always spoke gently—

"I wouldn't talk so much about them on Sunday."

"You wouldn't, ha!" he said, turning and pinching her nose, his way of being playful. "What harm in that? aint there something in the Bible 'bout bein' good to oxen on Sunday? An' let me tell you, we wouldn't be ridin' 'long here this mornin' in this here fine rig ef it wa'n't for the money in jes' sich cattle."

Lydia made no reply, and as she looked at the cattle, while he continued talking, she caught a glance of the large, sad eyes of these beautiful dumb creatures as they lifted their heads with a startled air, and the thought came over her that she had much in common with them, that she too was valued only as a wealth-increasing invest-

ment, that both were somehow the victims of a hopeless environment, creatures of some relentless fate. But this was too bold a thought for her truly religious mind to cherish; it seemed to her a whisper of evil from her soul's adversary.

And again she thought, why need she object to talk about cattle? Were not thoughts equal to words before the Searcher of all hearts? And try as she might, the dreadful details of housekeeping haunted her mind irrespective of the holiness of the day.

The first Sabbath of each month brought the Sacred Communion period, or, as it was familiarly called, the Basket Meeting, for on this Sunday the many carriages contained baskets, and the baskets were filled with all the nice and dainty things at all available for such occasions. It seemed the proper time for testing and making known (and oh! the delight of making known!) that last new, wonderful cake, or pickles, jellies, meats—anything, indeed, which these amateur epicures could devise in the way of tempting viands.

Between the services, under the shade of the beautiful forest trees that surrounded the little church, the good ladies gathered in groups, spread their snowy damask cloths, and unloaded the treasures of the baskets.

It was a truly idyllic scene. The honest, sun-browned farmers, often holding their long-robed infants, gathered in groups and chatting about farm matters; the young men hovering around the tables, endeavoring to be useful in spreading the tables, often the victims of the innocent coqueries of the fair young girls; the pretty children passing from father to mother; the handsome, well-dressed matrons, cumbered with much serving, yet seeming to rejoice in the burden; the kind old pastor, passing from group to group, shaking hands and making friendly inquiries—all this made a beautiful scene and lives now in the memory of many as a part of

the good old time before they became more "townefied."

The scene was apt to include a few fashionably dressed and attractive-looking young gentlemen, who had ridden out from the town, bent on being rustic for one day, and who spent most of their time in looking at and seeking to be agreeable to the pretty girls, who, flattered by their attentions, often showed a preference that brought a feeling of dismay and anger to slighted, heart-aching young farmers, who would glower at the "dandies" hovering about the girls, and perhaps in their attempts to be witty and agreeable, making the often repeated remark:

"Ah! your way of sitting in church reminds me of the Last Day, 'rathah hard on us goats on the left hand, you know.'"

They who now recall these good old times forget, as they should forget, all the little jealousies and heart-burnings that came from rival cookeries and table appointments.

Mrs. Shore was always making some innovation. She was the first to bring with her a napkin for each one, and she made such a display in handing them around, and talked so much about the large number she had in the last wash, that the harmless napkins ought to have blushed themselves red over the much talk about them and their owner during the following week. Her next innovation was silver forks, which she pronounced "fawks," and the forks were even more severely discussed than the napkins; nevertheless, the revilers soon followed her fashions, and, strange to say, found nothing amusing or ridiculous in the fashion adopted.

Lydia, with her high ideal of what communion should be, was sorely tried on these days. When she knew that her heart should be pure, full of love and forgiveness, containing naught of uncharity toward her neighbor, knew that not per-

ishable but imperishable meat should be in her thoughts, she could not, with all her efforts, rid herself of the worry of the dinner. Nor had she the compensation of this sinfulness and known spiritual loss in the gratified feeling of success in worldly things, for in spite of all her efforts, not only was the cooking of the usual inferior order, but Mrs. Shore had such an exasperating way of noticing everything that feelings far from the sweet charity she sought often possessed her.

Mrs. Shore was so friendly, so kind, and would come over just as she was taking things out of the basket, and arranging them with a doleful, worried air, and bring something new or nice as her last exploit in cooking, going into all the particulars of the making of the wonderful dainty.

"I thought you'd like to try some of it, Liddy. You look tired. Are you well? Dear! I wish I had that beautiful wavy hair of yours. Waves are coming in fashion now, and you'll be fashionable in spite of yourself. Well, I must go back. Who eats with you to-day? The Woods eat with us (the Woods were among the people she was accused of 'todying to'), and Mollie Wood will, of course, invite some of those young men from town. I must hurry back and help about the dinnah. Do come over and see me. You neveh come."

And Mrs. Shore would hurry away, little thinking what pain she had caused. She had no idea that she was a terror to her friend. She rather liked Lydia for the very reason that her weakness and inability in household matters made such a good background for her own virtues in that direction, and then, too, she had learned that Lydia had rich relations, which seemed a wonderful thing in her favor. She was really a kind-hearted, generous woman, and would have been very glad to help Lydia, if the thing had been possible. If, as her detractors charged, she was superficial (vain, "stuck

up" body, all on the outside, they called it), this fault was certainly superficial, if it were a fault, that she found such untold delight in her beautiful housekeeping that she could not do otherwise than sound its praises.

The churchyard was the cemetery of the neighborhood, not densely populated. There was abundant room for picnic purposes, and the white stones visible among the green grass, lighted with flickering sunbeams, seemed not to add any thought of gloom to the beautiful scene. They had probably never heard of the skull present at the Egyptian feast. Certainly they did not seem to be moralizing over the transitoriness of all things earthly. Doubtless there were other aching hearts besides Lydia's sighing for rest. She, at least, often on these Sundays looked at the peaceful graves, and longed unspeakably for the hour of her release. But this longing was always accompanied with a timid doubt as to whether she had that assurance of Divine favor that she sought, for if she had would there be any sinful repinings? And she prayed fervently for that inner peace and joy that would enable her not only to say, but feel—"Not my will, but Thine be done."

Lydia yielded her hope of religious companionship as she had yielded other hopes; and if it was true that her neighbors could not understand her, considered her "queer" and somewhat fanatic, aside from the unpardonable sin of being a poor housekeeper, yet the conviction of real goodness deepened upon them. When sickness and death invaded their peaceful homes, her unwearied, unostentatious kindness often won the profound confidence that comes in hours of affliction, and it would sometimes dawn upon them that the good she sought might be better than the good they had found.

There was one among those whom Lydia often met that, all unknown to her, gave her much intuitive sympathy, and

made her the subject of many of those half-formed thoughts that border on the land of dreams and fancies.

This was her husband's bachelor friend, Edward Thompson, the man who seldom looked at her, and usually answered her in monosyllables.

To him Lydia seemed a rose set among thorns—thorns that were cruelly wounding her—or as a dove taken in a snare. Once when examining a strip of wild

wood that joined his farm, with the thought of having it cleared, he stooped and gathered a wild sensitive plant blooming there in all its tender beauty amid its safe surroundings. Soon the delicate leaves locked themselves together, the branches drooped gracefully, reproachfully, and the golden flower withered away. She was like that, he said, a sensitive plant gathered rudely, and dying slowly, but surely.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT.

THE cold wind blows and the earth is filled
 With the pitiless driving snow,
 And wayfarers quite to the bone are chilled
 As over the hills they go;
 But a light shines out from a window far,
 That warms the heart as it beams,
 And types the light from Bethlehem's Star,
 That down through the ages gleams.

Ah! blest is the heart in a selfish world
 Who through desolation sees
 A light shine out like a star impearled
 As he drops on his world-sore knees,
 And blesses the love that keeps alight
 A memory of old-time glee,
 When the merry games of the Christmas night
 Were played round the Christmas tree.

God give you merry Christmas,
 And a bright and glad New Year;
 Abundant health, sufficient wealth,
 Firm friends your days to cheer;
 A trusting heart that knows no art,
 And a soul that knows no fear.

MISS COURTNEY.

"More are men's ends marked than their lives before."—*Shakespeare.*

"I DONE s'pose it 'll make no difference. Mahrs' Tom is a very nice gent'man, but Miss Courtney is the one to 'pend upon."

"Oh! Miss Courtney; she do well 'nough. But a woman's no account in the long run, and that's a fact."

"You Jim, you jist git out with your fool talk. It 'pears to me you've run so all powerful fast, you'll never kotch up with your ownself. I'd jist like to know whar you'd be now, if it warn't for your mammy? Not that she done so powerful much in the raisin' the likes of you. I reckon it's not much you and Mahrs' Tom would git to eat off this plantation but blackberries, if Miss Courtney was trampoosin' the kintry like some folks I hearn tell of."

"Of course, Miss Courtney, she's good 'nough for home-folks, but she'd not do so well in the Senate Chamber. Mahrs' Tom, he jist sot there and read the papers, and writ letters; and the little fellers they call pages, they ducks in and out to tote Mahrs' Tom's errands. As to women going to Congress, that's fool talk. There's nary a woman in the Senate Chamber, and there's no more chance for them than for this colored person."

"You jist stop thar with you foolishness," said Uncle Caesar, making a long draw on his pipe. "The nigger will never be ob more account than poor white trash. I'm kind of sot in the idee that there's a kitchen in heaben, and it's jist thar that the niggers will find thar place after the day of judgment."

"I don't car', kitchen or house, if thar's nothin to do, and plenty of fat meat and hoeecake," said Aunt Patty, contentedly. "But that's not the question; I done said, and I keeps to it, that if Mahrs' Tom dies

to-night, as Jim says is most likely, it'll make no manner of differ'nce, since Miss Courtney continues lively."

"Miss Courtney, she can't sot in Mahrs' Tom's chair in the Senate Chamber in Washin'ton," objected Jim.

"But she might. As for Mahrs' Tom himself, he always done what Miss Courtney say, which is a heap like sottin' in his seat—'cept in the one question of buildin' the new house. That I 'low she was sot against; and she'd not gin in at last, if they hadn't took up the idee to jine the new house to the old one. 'I couldn't bar to see the old house my mother lived in tore down for a fine new one,' she says to me. 'But now your Mahrs' Tom can keep the fine new rooms, and I'll keep to the old ones. Thar good 'nough for the likes of me,' she says, with a larf!"

"Mahrs' Tom, he never keep much to the new house. It's powerful hard to keep a gent'man chained up like a dog. Miss Courtney, she thinks she know eberything, but I could tell her a heap," said Jim, triumphantly.

"Tell Miss Courtney! Git out. Do you take me for a fool, you yallow nigger you!" cried Aunt Patty, in great contempt. "Tell Miss Courtney!" she repeated; "tell your granny how to suck goose-eggs!"

"Did you eber hear tell of New York?" asked Jim, not without significance.

"Did you eber hear tell ob Amelia Coat-House?" asked Aunt Patty, with the same derision.

"Thar's a heap of difference," explained Jim. "What you do is public in Amelia Coat-House; but New York is like de grave; a mighty good place to kiver up things is New York."

"You can't kiver up Mahrs' Tom on his death-bed; and it's mighty like foolishness to talk of buryin' him anywhar

but jist in the old fambly buryin' ground down by the old apple-orchard. Mahrs' Tom is a very nice gent'man, but I's powerful glad it's him that's got to go to glory, and not Miss Courtney that the Good Man is gwine to took."

So much for a purely local reputation. Colonel Tom Beverley, prone on his death-bed, was sincerely mourned only by his two elderly sisters, who insisted upon nursing him.

The home community were placidly satisfied if Miss Courtney continued at the helm; and the politicians—who were waiting, not impatiently, but with content, for the dead man's shoes—interested and anxious, but not unhappy.

He lay there as rigid as if already dead. Only his eyes seemed alive, and followed every movement of Miss Courtney's, as if fearful of losing sight of her—eyes that were preternaturally bright, with an imploring look in them. He could not turn his head, and she dared not move away from his limited range of vision. Yet to see the beseeching stare and not comprehend its meaning was a torment she felt the impulse to run from. It was terrible!

She tried in every way to get at the meaning of that look. Was it something in his childhood, that she recalled so easily?—in his youth, of which she was more doubtful? events in the family she had forgotten, or something that they had long judiciously passed over? or was it business or political worry?

Perhaps it was a kindly concern for the two women who would be left without a man's protection, or were thoughts for his soul's welfare pressing in upon him?

Through all these questions the eyes still looked imploringly, even reproachfully. Why did she not understand? Miss Courtney's anguish was unendurable. That Tom, her only brother, for whom she had sacrificed every desire and ambition

of her life—Tom, whose smallest interest she had never overlooked—that he should lie dying with something he desired to tell her! It was more than she could bear, though she was the sort of woman, friends said, who could never break down.

"O Tom!" Miss Courtney cried, in her despair, and falling on her knees beside him; "if I discover anything you wish, it shall be done. You may trust me; oh! you may trust me, my dear!"

And then the eyelids dropped and she was sure that a look of great relief came into the fast-dimming eyes.

All this while Miss Betty sat at the window, softly crying to herself, though it was difficult to realize a grief that had come so suddenly as this stroke of poor Tom's, and which seemed to make so little change.

She could see Miss Courtney by the bedside, and through the window the familiar lawn stretching to the road, and the woods beyond, behind which the sun was also fast dying. Turning her head slightly and looking in a direction Uncle Cæsar termed "caterbias," she could see the old man himself and Aunt Patty, with Jim, poor Tom's body-servant, whom he always took to Washington with him. Poor things! They were no doubt in great trouble, for poor Tom had always been an indulgent master.

Across the lawn, in classically scant skirts, and driving Miss Courtney's young turkeys to shelter, came a young ebony Minerva. Miss Betty wiped her eyes to count the turkeys, a difficult arithmetical problem, since heedless Nerve and the erratic turkeys habitually got mixed up. So that whether there were forty or sixty, Miss Betty could not determine, and neither number was correct.

And then suddenly came the end. Poor Tom was dead, mourned by two faithful women, and leaving a fresh responsibility upon Miss Courtney, since she had pledged herself to do his wishes, had prom-

ised she did not know what, nor could she form even a conjecture.

The Honorable Thomas Beverley had been dead a month. Blue Lodge wore a less lively appearance than in his lifetime, for the sisters preferred the old part of the house, and only occasionally the painted windows of the more modern additions were opened to air the rooms.

These windows were the admiration of the county. They were not gaudily emblazoned, as painted windows usually are, but each pane, of moderate size, had delicately depicted on its white surface some production of the South. On one glass was a cotton bloom, and on the next its boll; here the green pennant of the sugarcane, and next it an ear of corn. A bunch of bananas was flanked on either side by a pine-apple and an orange. One pane blossomed with a gorgeous flower; another was painted with a bird—so that nothing which that wonderful stretch of country from the Chesapeake to the Gulf of Mexico produced was forgotten.

Only one room in the new part of the house was in actual use, and that was the library. There Colonel Tom had always sat when at home, and to it Miss Courtney came every morning to sort the mail, answer any necessary letters, and read the newspaper. It was rather a solemn time, these morning hours spent in the library, which, though well ventilated by numerous windows, was also gloomed by the long rows of books that absorbed the light, making the middle of the room, where Colonel Tom's writing-table stood, a perpetual twilight.

It was at this table that Miss Courtney sat sorting the mail Uncle Cæsar had just delivered. Miss Betty's correspondence was always voluminous, and Miss Courtney, who made it a rule never to turn a page in writing a letter, often wondered what Betty could find to cross her sheets with. She rang the bell, and sent Miss Betty her share of the mail before she

opened her own letters. One, postmarked New York, she put aside as unimportant, for neither she nor the estate had any correspondents in that city. Indeed, it was by a mere accident, after answering her letters and reading the paper, that she chanced to see the letter lying neglected. She took it up with a feeling of annoyance. Only an advertisement, she supposed. There ought to be a law against taking up a person's time with such nuisances. But the name of an attorney, printed at the head of the page, startled her.

Then she read, what the man called a *mere* fact, which was certainly startling. If he were to be believed. Colonel Tom Beverley, who had always appeared a happy-go-lucky bachelor, was, in fact, a very much married man. The attorney wrote, not in the interest of the wife, who was dead; nor of the son, also deceased; but of a grandson—a baby.

At first it was incomprehensible that Tom, the brother she had devoted her life to, could have gone through all these gains and losses, these joys and sorrows, and she to have had no hint of them. There must be some mistake; it simply was impossible. And then swiftly—as most things came to Miss Courtney—poor Tom's imploring look as he lay on his death-bed came back to her. Here, then, was the secret! This was what he wished to tell her!

Poor Tom! he had always been in a little awe of Miss Courtney, who had a stern way of seeing right, and an unambiguous way of expressing an abhorrence. How she would have received his death-confession, if he had been permitted to speak, there was no use then in questioning. How she took the wonderful tidings after poor Tom had been dead a month was more to the purpose.

For an heir was what Miss Courtney really wished for. She was losing all interest in the estate, since her good management would only enrich some dis-

tant cousin. She had never proposed to Miss Betty that they should name an heir, for she had a dislike to know who it was that would wait, with well-concealed impatience, perhaps, for her dead shoes. But the idea of a baby pleased her. It would be years before he would set any store upon his inheritance; and she could go back to her old work with renewed zest. And the great house would not be so dismal with a baby in it, a plaything for Miss Betty and an interest for herself. So, instead of the censure Colonel Tom apprehended, and the perplexity the lawyer thought he had sprung upon her, Miss Courtney was pleased, and relieved from much that troubled her. It was a full hour after she had read the letter before she closed the desk upon it and went to tell Miss Betty the strange news.

The room was small, in comparison with those in the new part of the house, and the day being damp and chilly, Miss Betty had a fire of lightwood blazing in the quaint corner fire-place. She was sitting before it, absorbed in a novel—the story of which was very moving. A heroine, beautiful, good, refined, and an heiress, was suddenly discovered to be a poor fisherman's daughter. Miss Courtney's entrance was an interruption.

She stopped to mend the fire before she spoke, giving Miss Betty time to come down, if possible, to every-day life, a descent she made, it must be confessed, with impatience, for all the romance of life Miss Betty found in novels.

"Well, dear Courtney, what has brought you here?" she asked, not without a stir of curiosity.

"A good deal has brought me," said Miss Courtney. "Blue Lodge, or rather the Beverley estate, has found an heir."

And then she told of poor Tom's grandson.

"O Courtney, dear! is he—is it all in the bands of matrimony?" gasped Miss Betty.

"How else, since he is Tom's heir. Why

should you think evil of your brother?" she asked, fiercely.

"But why did he never tell he had a wife?"

"Because he was a fool," said Miss Courtney, coldly. "I do not question Tom's wife, though I may her refinement, since ladies do not marry off-hand, as sailors do. If she had not been vulgar he would not have hidden her. But she is dead, poor woman. For the same reason I'll not go surety for the son. There must have been good reasons for Tom's never having owned him. But the grandson, being a baby, it is quite different. We can bring him up worthy of the name."

Miss Betty was enthusiastic. A baby in the house! An heir, to be educated to be worthy of his inheritance. At last a bit of romance had come to her dull life, and not out of a novel. But Miss Courtney was severely practical. Though poor Tom's dying eyes were convincing, and Jim, his body-servant, gave important testimony to a foolish marriage, yet she owed it to the estate to have everything legally proved. To her it was quite plain. Tom's fear of the effects of his marriage on a respectable constituency just after his political success, and also—and here Miss Courtney winced—his dread of her certain scorn, she who despised all falsehood. Poor Tom, being, as it were, twice driven, and finding plain Mr. Thomas moderately well off, and with a business that kept him much from home, was not suspected, was glad to keep up the delusion, though the dual life was to a man of his disposition at times a trial.

Miss Courtney, who would willingly have covered up everything and have taken Tom's grandson on faith, selected Charley Beverley, a cousin and young lawyer, to go to New York, prove the legality of the baby's claims, and, having done so, to bring him in triumph to Blue Lodge.

It was a little hard on Charley, who had had a distinct hope of being heir himself, to be the one chosen to bring home

poor Tom's grandson. But he went manfully into the 'business, with no idea of a reward nor much confidence in Miss Courtney's assertion that "the child would be no trouble, since he would have a nurse," for the nurse was his chief thorn in the flesh.

In the meantime, Blue Lodge grew lively in making ready for the advent of the young heir, whose rights Charley Beverley had found not the least trouble in proving, the marriage of poor Tom being altogether legal. The principal objection to be surmounted was the young mother's dismay when asked to give up her child to his two maiden aunts. Charley's letter to Miss Courtney was in sympathy with the mother. It was decidedly hard on her, he said, and he went on to describe her as pretty, amiable, and devoted to her child, and so in great distress.

Miss Betty's sympathy was greatly moved, and she was anxious to bring the mother with the child to Blue Lodge. But Miss Courtney was obdurate. She wrote to Charley that neither she nor Miss Betty would make the child her heir unless he came with only his nurse to Blue Lodge. To be sure, she wrote secretly, the child *must* come, but if possible she wished to have him untrammelled. Charley must make every effort to bring only the nurse with him.

After a somewhat longer delay, Charley wrote that the mother had consented to let him bring the child, on condition that his nurse, who had been with him since his birth, should be allowed not only to come to Blue Lodge, but should stay as long as the child needed her; to which proposition Miss Courtney at once acceded, much to old Aunt Patty's disgust, who had a hankering for young Mahrs' Tom's nursery.

It was then that the old nursery, that had been airy enough for Mahrs' Tom himself, was voted gloomy, and one of the modern rooms with its pictured windows—as good as a picture book—was selected

for the young heir of Blue Lodge and the estate.

For days, even weeks, Miss Betty was busy in decorating the nursery for poor Tom's grandson, and if he turned out to be a veritable heathen Chinee or Jap, there was no doubt of his satisfaction. Miss Courtney provided the comforts, and she also counted out the gold to pay for it all.

"It looks powerful like she were doty," Aunt Patty said, privately, to old Caesar.

Only Charley Beverley was slow to move. New York was seductive; or for private reasons he kept the two ladies at Blue Lodge on the tip-toe of expectation, as well as the neighborhood, though usually nine days of wonder are as much as can be expected in any community. Miss Courtney was growing angry, and Miss Betty tearful, when Charley telegraphed for Uncle Caesar and the double carriage to be at the station for the through train.

"Of course the double carriage. What else did he expect? Did he suppose I'd send the dump-cart for Tom's grandson?" asked Miss Courtney, who was fast losing patience.

"He didn't mean any disrespect. It must be the nurse who is worrying him. I have always heard these Northern nurses are quite terrible—quite ladies, in fact, or think themselves so," explained Miss Betty. "They insist upon having lunches of beefsteak and beer. Now, if it were broiled chicken, or squab pastry—"

"Nonsense!" said Miss Courtney. "If she has any such airs, Aunt Patty will soon take her place."

To await an arrival by carriage is always trying; for, make all due allowance for detentions, the time is always longer than you think it will be. And when you have given up watching, and have managed to fix your attention upon something else, you are certain to be taken by surprise. Miss Courtney's experience was the common one, and Uncle Caesar

drove the double carriage into the *porte cochère* when neither she nor Miss Betty was expecting him.

But they had time to reach the hall when Charley came running up the long flight of steps with poor Tom's grandson in his arms. Miss Courtney was, of course, first, and it was into her arms he put the child. Luckily, the little fellow came of a fearless race, and was inclined to take possession of anything offered him. And Miss Courtney's arms were strong; and in her heart she was flattered, as elderly women are sure to be, by the small man's confidence in her.

Miss Betty had come forward, and was quickly on her knees as worshiper of this new idol. And Aunt Patty showed her black face and white teeth, to his surprise and fearful admiration. So that when Charley Beverley appeared the second time up the high flight of steps into the hall, no one at first noticed that the nurse of young Mahrs' Tom was leaning on his arm. Miss Betty was the first to see him, and struggled to her feet with a faint—"O Charley!"

Perhaps Miss Betty's exclamation, faint as it was, attracted Miss Courtney's attention; and, besides, she was standing nearer the door, where the light was stronger. At any rate, she let Aunt Patty take young Mahrs' Tom into her strong arms—he being willing to investigate into the nature and texture of a dark skin.

Miss Courtney, thus set free, for a moment stood watching the novel sight of Charley Beverley with young Mahrs' Tom's nurse on his arm.

Whether it was Charley's face, or Miss Courtney's always swift intuition to take in events—perhaps it was both—at any rate, Miss Courtney came forward and kissed the young woman on Charley's arm.

"My dear, you are welcome to Blue Lodge," she said.

Miss Betty was aghast, until she found

young Mahrs' Tom's nurse was in reality his mother.

How Miss Courtney made the discovery she never explained; and though she admired the pluck and love that made the mother willing to play the humble rôle of nurse to her baby, rather than part from him or let him lose an inheritance, yet that same young woman was an annoyance to her. No doubt the younger woman found the delicate, refined ways of the two elderly women irksome, and their love of propriety foolish. Certainly kind-hearted Miss Betty grew a little vexed with the numberless excuses she had to make for her niece-in-law's departure from the etiquette she was brought up in.

"Customs are different in the North," she used to say; or, with a little laugh—"We are so old-fashioned, and not in the least stylish."

But Miss Courtney said nothing. Young Mahrs' Tom was to her as the great gift of love, enabling her to endure all things. Besides, is not the command, "Use hospitality," as binding on a Virginian's conscience as any of the ten? For Charley she *did* feel uneasy. Every day brought him to Blue Lodge, and usually his purpose in coming was too frivolous to mention. Either clients were few, or he neglected them. But Miss Betty was always pleased to see him. For a young man to be thoughtful and attentive to elderly ladies was not only kind, but also chivalrous.

One day, finding the sun oppressive, Miss Courtney took refuge in the *porte cochère*, which the sun never penetrated, and was surprised to find it occupied. The next moment she knew it was small Tom's mamma and Charley. She went away hastily, and so noiselessly they never knew that they had had a visitor.

The next day Miss Courtney sent for Charley to come to her in the library. She hardly let him be seated before she made him a proposal. She was getting

old, she said, and she thought it would be better to have a superintendent on the sugar plantation—some one who would be careful of young Tom's interest, and in whom she could feel confidence. The estate could afford to pay a handsome salary, and there was a comfortable house on the plantation. The neighborhood was charming. If Charley would take the position, it would relieve her of much anxiety and annoyance. If he did accept it, she was sorry to have to ask him to go so far South in the summer; but the country was not unhealthy, and she was anxious to have him on the spot as soon as possible.

It was then that a change came over Charley's radiant face. It was a wonderfully fine offer, and it was kind in Miss Courtney to think of him when a more experienced man might do better for her. Would she give him a few days to consider? A week Miss Courtney graciously gave him, but at the end of that time, if he accepted the position, he must be ready to start.

But Charley decided in a few hours, indeed, before he left Blue Lodge, taking no one into consultation but young Tom's mamma. Of course, a young woman

who had put her pride in her pocket, and had hired herself as her own child's nurse rather than separate from him was a remarkable person, and worth having for an adviser. But Charley also had a stipulation to make, which was, that he might take young Tom's mother into the bargain. Miss Courtney consented without hesitation, whilst Miss Betty was greatly shocked.

"Do you think it quite proper, dear Courtney?" she asked. "It might do in New York—I can't say, though—but certainly not in Louisiana, and in a creole neighborhood, where they are so particular about their young ladies. And for one to be Charley's housekeeper—"

"Charley wants a wife, not a housekeeper," said Miss Courtney, dryly.

And Miss Betty's scruples were removed, especially as young Mahrs' Tom was to continue master of Blue Lodge, as well as of his two maiden aunts. And then, too, a wedding at Blue Lodge, even if there was no time worth mentioning for preparations, still, it was a wedding, and so very like a runaway match; it was quite charming, so like a novel.

EMILY READ,
Author of "Pilot Fortune," etc.

HOPE.

O WONDERFUL star!
Which shinest afar,

With the marvelous light of thy radiance clear,
Undimmed by a shadow of doubt or fear;
Shining through tempests without and within,
Through the clouds of sorrow, despair, and sin.

O beautiful star! still shine,
And lead me on by thy rays divine!

HATTIE A. COOLEY.

THREE YOUNG WIVES.*

By T. S. ARTHUR.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Mr. Allen took the chair at the next regular business meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association, and let his eye pass over the unexpectedly large assemblage, he was surprised to see many faces which he had never seen in the hall of the Association before. Surprise changed to annoyance and displeasure when his gaze rested upon Judge Glendenning, not far from whom sat his own son. Mr. Vivian was there also; an unusual occurrence, for he was not in the habit of attending the business meetings of the Association. Three other clergymen, representing different Christian denominations, were likewise present. What did this mean? There was trouble in the air, and Mr. Allen felt its disturbing jar. That there was a gathering here of the forces of an enemy he did not doubt. But what agency had been at work to give so strong a rally! What secret movement, that its influence should have reached so many, while he knew nothing of its existence! If Mr. Allen had been told, he would scarcely have credited the story; for the influence which had wrought so powerfully on others would have had little effect upon him. What was this influence?

If the reader will turn back a few pages he will find something said about a bright little woman, with a soft, girlish face, and clear blue eyes, who had been quietly moving about and saying her say. In a single week, as there stated, she had talked with over a score of persons who were connected with the Association, and weakened the faith of at least half of them in the policy which had heretofore been pursued in regard to amusements and recreations. Particularly with certain

Christian mothers, who had sons whom neither the Church nor the Association was holding away from the world and its allurements, had she found a readier hearing than she had hoped.

Pending the organization and preliminary business of the Association, let us look more closely at the movements and work of little Mrs. Raynor, and see just what she had been doing. We go back for a few weeks. It is the evening after Florence Whitcomb's baby was born, and while yet the life of her friend is trembling in an uncertain balance. All day she had been restless and anxious, flitting about like the perturbed spirit that she was—now at Millie Sanderson's, now at Mrs. Wilder's, and now calling to inquire about the condition of Florence, who was too ill to be seen, and to look at and wonder over the tiny bit of humanity that lay sleeping in the nurse's arms. When her husband came home after the day's business was over, he did not fail to notice the higher color in her face and the strange restlessness of her eyes, which were of an unusual brightness, and which were often fixed upon him with an intentness of look that was puzzling, and with a meaning in them which he could not understand. In the quality of her voice, and in the slight unsteadiness of her hand as she reached his cup across the table, Carl Raynor detected the signs of an inward disturbance which his wife was holding down with a strong effort.

A cigar and a newspaper, from which he read aloud, occupied him for half an hour after supper, while Rose sat with some needlework in her hands. Laying aside his paper at the end of this time, Carl arose from his chair, saying:

"I told Rob Sanderson that I'd call

around this evening. I shall be gone for only a little while."

"Oh! well; then I'll go with you. I want to see Millie," was the response of Rose, who laid aside her work as she spoke. "I'll be ready in a moment"—and not waiting for either consent or objection, she went with a quick movement from the room. In a few minutes she returned, her face bright and glowing, and more beautiful, in the eyes of her husband, than it had ever seemed before.

"Haven't you seen Millie to-day?" asked Carl, as they left the house, with something in his voice that betrayed to Rose his suspicion that she had a purpose in going with him beyond her desire to see her friend.

"Oh! yes, two or three times," she replied, without hesitation.

"And you're dying to see her again?"

"Of course I am."

"Couldn't live till morning?"

"I'm afraid not"—a sweet laugh trilling in her throat, as she drew her arm more tightly within that of her husband.

Then they walked on in silence for a little way, each aware that the other had veiled under this lightness of speech a graver feeling. The home of Robert Sanderson was not far away. Just as they reached the door, it was opened, and by the young man himself.

"Why, Carl! I was just going round to your house," he exclaimed—"and Rosey, too! Millie will be delighted to see you."

And Millie was delighted; for instead of a lonely evening and troubled thoughts, she was to have the society of one of her dearest friends.

While the two men smoked and chatted, the young wives had their womanly talk and gossip, in which they found much more to interest them than did their husbands in the desultory conversation in which they were engaged. The fact was, that both of the latter were somewhat

restless to get away. They were scarcely half through with their first cigar when Carl said:

"Suppose we go and look after Whitcomb."

"Not this evening," came promptly from the lips of his wife, as she turned her face, in which a sweet smile but partially hid the serious intent expressed in her words; "we're going to have a game of whist, aren't we, Millie?"

"Of course we are," and, suiting her act to her words, Mrs. Sanderson arose and drew a card-table into the centre of the room, and laid on it a pack of cards.

"Shall we rebel against this usurpation of authority?" said Raynor, half in jest and half in earnest.

"Discretion is the better part of valor," replied Sanderson. "Where the odds are largely against you it is better to yield than to fight. I counsel surrender."

"Then surrender it is; though I must say that in my view you overestimate the strength of our enemy."

"It isn't the first time in the world's history," said Rose, as they drew their chairs to the card-table, "that friends have been mistaken for enemies. But let them have it so, Millie dear; maybe they'll find out their mistake one of these days. How shall we play? Let it be you and I, Millie, against our husbands."

"A challenge!" exclaimed Sanderson, entering at once into the spirit of the thing. In a few moments the deal was made, the hands of the players examined, and the contest inaugurated. It was not long before the two young men found that the cards were running against them, and that their wives were playing with an unexpected care and skill. If there had been anything like half-heartedness on their part at the opening of the game, it was all gone now, and they began playing with a keen interest in the result, which was kept up for nearly an hour, when Lewis Whitcomb, who had gone to the Grant House in the hope of meeting

one or both of his friends there, came in. The players were, by this time, too deeply absorbed in their game to give it up.

After a cordial welcome and a few earnest inquiries after Florence, who had been quietly sleeping since early in the evening and was showing many favorable symptoms, Sanderson said to Whitcomb:

"You take my hand, Lew. They're beating us dreadfully. I don't know what's the matter; everything goes against me this evening."

While the young man was hesitating, Millie, in a pretty, imperative way, came in between their visitor and her husband, and pressing her cards into his hand, said:

"You're just in time. There's something which I had forgotten that must be done to-night."

And even before he had opportunity for a polite remonstrance, he found himself in the chair from which Millie had risen.

Just how it was done neither Raynor nor his friend Sanderson had observed; but it was all settled, as declared by Millie and Rose, that cards were to be in order on the next evening, eight o'clock; place, the house of Carl Raynor.

"How charming Millie was this evening—just like her old self," said Raynor, as they entered their pleasant home. "I haven't seen her in such spirits for a long time."

A hint at what might be the cause of this was on the lips of Rose, but she wisely kept her own counsel, in fear lest she might betray the fact that a secret understanding had been established between her and Millie, and that they were acting in concert.

"Good spirits are contagious," she only replied. "We were all at our best."

"Indeed! I hadn't thought of that. Was I at my best?"

"Weren't you?" an arch smile playing about the questioner's lips.

"I'm sure I don't know."

"You enjoyed yourself?"

"Haven't spent a pleasanter evening in a long time."

"Nor I. There was only one shadow."

"I was not conscious of any."

"Florry was in my thought all the while. I was so glad Lewis came in. He promised to be here to-morrow evening. Do you know, Carl, dear, that I feel very anxious about him."

"Why?" But before Rose could answer, her husband said, in a more serious tone of voice: "You're afraid for him now that Florence is sick, and I don't know but that there is cause. I'm growing a little concerned about him myself. The Grant House is not a safe place for him to go in the evening. He isn't strong enough to resist the temptation to drink more than is prudent, which is sure to meet every one who goes there."

So good an opportunity to urge upon her husband consideration of duty toward his friend was not lost by Rose; and, with a womanly tact that was admirable in its way, she succeeded in turning his thoughts into new channels, and impressing him with a concern for Lewis Whitcomb which soon deepened into a purpose. No word of any danger to himself was hinted by Rose. All her expressed anxiety was for his friend, and for the sorrow and shame that would break the heart of Florence if he were to become the slave of an appetite which had already laid the soft and enticing pressure of its tenacious hand upon him.

"What to do is the trouble," said Carl, as they talked about Whitcomb. "We can't have a game of billiards or tenpins in the evening without going through a bar-room and meeting friends who insist on your taking a drink with them. After a hard day's work one needs a little change and recreation. It's very nice at home for those of us who have homes, but even we get restless, now and then, and want something more earnest and ex-

citing than a book or a quiet game of cribbage or backgammon. Isn't it strange, when one thinks of it, that there is not in this whole town a single place of common social resort for its young men anywhere between a drinking-saloon and a prayer-meeting? It's piety or whisky drinking—pull Dick or pull devil—and everybody knows that the devil has the best of it. I'll wager anything that you will meet every night in the bar-room and billiard-saloon of the Grant House five young men belonging to our most respectable families to one that you will find in the Young Men's Christian Association rooms. I say nothing of the coarse, vulgar, rowdy element, with a natural downward drift, that is always eddying around a tavern."

All this Rose laid up in her heart. On the next day she heard from Mrs. Wilder about Judge Glendenning and his billiard-table.

"All very well, as far as it goes," she replied. "But what is a single billiard-table in a private house? Something pretty to talk about, but how many is it going to keep away from the tavern? Not one in twenty who might be saved from temptation and brought under purer and more elevating influences, if our Young Men's Christian Association would only unite the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove. Judge Glendenning is all right. He understands the matter; but we want broader work than he can do alone."

"Small beginnings often lead to large results," Mrs. Wilder answered. "It is a great gain that the Judge has been moved to do something for our young men, and a signally promising incident connected with this movement is the fact that he starts out with the declared purpose of reforming some of his own bad habits, and of setting a new and better example to his fellow-citizens. The work he is about to begin will broaden, without doubt."

"I hope so," was Rose's half-doubting response.

Her busy little head and that of her friend Millie were laid together for hours during that day. Both had become aroused to the danger that threatened to make shipwreck of so many lives and to desolate so many of the homes around them; and they felt its shadow creeping into the brightness of their own lives and darkening their own homes.

In the evening Millie and her husband came round, as they had promised, but as late as nine o'clock. Whitcomb had not made his appearance. Rose was particularly concerned, and several times referred to his absence.

"I'm really troubled about him," she said, at length. "I hope Florry isn't worse this evening."

"Hadn't we better go and see after him?" suggested her husband, looking at Sanderson, and dropping his hand of cards on the table as he spoke.

"It might be as well," was the reply. "There's no telling into what company he may fall. Some of the young fellows with whom he has been intimate are getting dreadfully wild."

Sanderson had also dropped his cards on the table, and now arose. Some slight opposition followed on the part of their wives, but it was without effect. Promising to be back in a short time, the two young men went away. They did not call at the home of their friend, but went directly to the hotel, where they found him in the billiard-room. Whitcomb had started for Raynor's, but an acquaintance, meeting him on the way, had taken him almost by force to the Grant House. It was evident at first sight that he had been drinking. He was not playing, but watching the progress of a game. His two friends found little difficulty in drawing him away from the tavern. After seeing him home, they walked slowly back to rejoin their wives.

"We must do something to keep Lewis

out of that place," said Carl Raynor, breaking the silence into which they had fallen.

"If we don't, he'll go to the bad," replied Sanderson, evincing no little concern. "There's a lot of young fellows at the Grant House who will drag him away down, if he keeps their company much longer. I had no idea that his head was so weak."

"Nor I. And there's just one thing that you and I have got to stand up to, Rob."

"What?"

"There must be no more drinking with Lew. If we would help him, we must lead him out of, instead of into, temptation."

"Then there will have to be some self-denial on our part."

"Of course. We shall hardly be able to get him into a safer way unless we walk in that way ourselves. Example is usually a more powerful agent than simple precept."

The two friends were silent for a little while, but in the mind of each thought was busy, and running in a direction it had rarely, if ever, taken before.

"The more I think about him, the more I feel troubled," Carl resumed. "Why, the very people who pretend to be his best friends make themselves his worst enemies. What chance has he, taking things as they are? Very little, that I can see. Even you and I have been in the conspiracy against him, inviting him to drink with us, not only at the public bar, but in our own homes. He can scarcely meet a friend on the street, or in a billiard-room, or tenpin alley, without being asked to take a glass of something. Really, when we think of it, this custom of treating among friends, and of setting out the bottle as one of the signs of hospitality, is a very dangerous one, and leads to the very worst consequences. It will be his ruin, I'm afraid."

"And that of a great many more whom I could name," remarked Sanderson.

"Millie and I made up our minds some time ago that in offering refreshments to our visitors wine and ale should not be included, and it is but fair to say for Millie that this was more her doing than mine."

"She's a brave little woman, and you think all the more of her for having set her face against the custom," said Carl.

"Of course I do; and I ought to feel ashamed of myself for having made it a little hard for her. I didn't give in quite as gracefully as I should have done. But it's all over now, bless her heart! There'll be no more treating of friends in my house."

"Nor in mine," replied Raynor. "Rose and I had a long talk about these matters after we came home from your house last evening."

"I heard to-day that Judge Glendenning is going to have a billiard-table in his house," remarked Sanderson.

"Yes, so it is said."

"What do you think of it?"

"All right, as far as it goes. It will be a good thing for the young men who are privileged to go there, as I am told that the Judge is going to treat his guests after the hospitable fashion you and Millie have adopted."

"And a good thing for the Judge himself, for he's been a pretty free drinker, as you know, and apt, of late, to get in a little more than his head will carry. I saw him quite lively last week."

"So did I."

By this time they were at Raynor's house, and the subject was dropped.

The inquiry made by Rose and Millie was too direct to be evaded, and the truth about Whitcomb was told as mildly as possible. At the suggestion of Rose it was agreed that Carl should invite him to tea on the next evening, and that Millie and her husband should also be their guests.

The friends met according to arrangement, but it was soon apparent that the

light-heartedness and abandon which had hitherto marked their social intercourse were absent, and that in their stead were an unusual seriousness and constraint of manner. The condition in which Sanderson and Raynor found their friend on the previous evening had troubled them both, and caused them much anxious thought. A sudden revelation of the peril in which he stood had come to them, and with it a strong desire to get him away from the threatened danger. Rose had spent at least two hours with Mrs. Wilder during the day, and her head was full of new ideas, plans, and purposes, most of which she wisely kept to herself, but some of them ran over into speech during the evening, almost startling her listeners with their seeming wildness. The young mother was reported as out of danger and the baby well—a cause of heartfelt pleasure to all.

There was not much card-playing after the long tea-table chat was over. Thought was so busy with all the players that it made constant interruptions and destroyed a lively interest in the games. A great many things were talked over or discussed warmly, among them Judge Glendenning's billiard-table scheme, the narrowness of the Young Men's Christian Association, the bad influence of taverns and drinking-saloons, and the great need there was of some place of common resort for the better class of young men in Westbrook, where they could find innocent amusements and the means of social recreation without being exposed to the temptations of the bar-room and the demoralizing associations inseparably connected therewith. It was most positively asserted by all three of the young men, that if such a place of common resort were furnished by the Young Men's Christian Association at their hall, they would never set foot in the Grant House again.

"Then the Association shall furnish it!" exclaimed Rose, almost startling her hear-

ers with the suddenness and intense fervor of her declaration.

"It will take more than one little woman to bring that about," remarked her husband, smiling as he spoke.

"Don't underrate the strength of your little woman's will," Rose answered, the deep color in her face and the repressed excitement of her manner showing how strong a hold upon her feelings this avowed purpose had taken. "If she once sets herself to do a thing, her heart being in it, she'll go through fire and water, if need be, to accomplish it."

"And your heart is in this thing?"

"Wait and see," she replied, with less excitement of manner, and in a quieter voice.

"We shall have to wait a long time before we see a billiard-table at Association Hall."

"You will see one there in less than six months," Rose answered.

"Not for years, if ever."

"In less than three months; mark my word for it!"

"All right, Rosy, dear! I'll make you a promise on that."

"Well, what do you promise?"

"An India shawl and a pair of diamond ear-rings on the day the billiard-table goes in."

"Then take my advice and begin to save up your money," Rose replied, laughing.

"The same to you, Millie," said Robert Sanderson—"an India shawl and a pair of diamond ear-rings."

Millie clapped her hands in affected pleasure. Then, turning to Whitcomb, she said:

"Florry mustn't be left out. What do you say for Florry?"

"Oh! Florry shall have the shawl and ear-rings. I'm safe enough on that promise," the young man replied, falling into the humor of his friends.

"It's a bargain, Millie," said Rose, "and we'll hold them to it."

"Of course we will."

"All right. If you mean business, so do we," the young men responded.

"And you'll not work against us; nor say a word about the shawls and earrings?"

"Not a word," was promised.

On the next day, and for many days afterward, Mrs. Wilder and the two young wives were in close conference. The former was able to give definite information in regard to the state of feeling among church people consequent on Judge Glendenning's open declaration that he was going to have a billiard-table in his house and invite young men to come and use it. Two parties were already forming—as we have seen—one inclined to look with favor upon anything that was likely to keep young men away from the taverns, and the other bitterly opposed to this innovation upon the social life of Westbrook. Dancing and card-playing were bad enough, and drawing far too many away from the spirit and life of the Church. But billiards! The wall of partition between the world and the Church had as well be thrown down at once!

Into the very midst of this conflict of feeling and opinion Rose soon threw herself, not at first with the ardor of partisanship, but with a close observation, that she might gather from both sides the weak as well as the strong points on which they rested. At the first opportunity which offered she had a long conversation with Judge Glendenning, drawing him out to speak, with a freedom that half surprised himself, of the plans for helping the young men of Westbrook which were floating in his mind.

"I am told," said the bright little woman, "that you have threatened to break up Association Hall?"

"Indeed!" replied the Judge, a humorous twitching at the corners of his mouth. "Anything else?"

"But I want to know about this. Did you ever make such a threat?"

"No; but I'll tell you what I did say. A pious brother in Mr. Vivian's church whom I happened to meet a few days ago undertook to read me a lecture on what he was pleased to call my attempt to corrupt young men and to lead them astray—especially, as he alleged, the sons of Christian parents—the hope and promise of the Church. I tried to make him understand that my only purpose was to endeavor, by means of such amusements as I considered innocent in themselves, to draw our young men away from saloons and taverns, and get them under safer influences. 'You will drag down more than you will ever lift up,' was his emphatic response. 'Your movement is a dangerous one,' he added, with considerable excitement of manner. 'It will prove a snare to many; and if successfully carried out, will tend to cripple, if not paralyze, the work of our Young Men's Christian Association.' 'You think so,' I said. 'I know so,' he replied. 'All right,' I returned, 'then the Association will have to be crippled and paralyzed both, for I am going to do all that I have said, and, most likely, a great deal more.' 'To break up the Association, if you can?' 'You are at liberty to put any construction on my acts that you please,' I made answer, not hiding the annoyance I felt, 'and to speak any evil of me that your heart may prompt. When I set out to do a thing, you may count on my doing it.' I saw by the expression of his eyes, as he turned away, that he would give a false report of what I had said, and it seems that he has done so."

"They call you a scoffer at religion," said Rose.

A change passed over the Judge's face as he replied—

"The tongue is an unruly member, and not as often under bit and bridle as it should be; and it is very possible that in my contempt for some of the Pharisees and hypocrites whom I happen to know, I may have used language that seemed like

scoffing at religion. But I am no scoffer at sacred things in my heart. What else do they say?"

"That you are a profane man."

"I don't deny that I have fallen into the bad habit of using profane language. But this I am going to reform. I shall not only set the young men who come to my house a good example here, but make it my business to repress in them all undue freedom of speech. Instead of the coarseness and profanity of the saloon, we are to have the chaste refinement of the drawing-room."

"Then why not invite young ladies as well as young gentlemen?" said Rose—"young wives and sisters, as well as their husbands and brothers?"

There was a lifting of the Judge's eyebrows as he looked at Mrs. Raynor curiously.

"To play at billiards?" he asked.

"Of course! Why not?"

"Would you like to play?"

"And beat my husband?" a bright look flashing into her face. "Nothing would please me better. If I could only get a chance to learn, and he knew nothing about it."

"No trouble in regard to that, Mrs. Raynor. I'll teach you. Bring your friend, Millie Sanderson, around, and I'll show you all about the game, and then you can come and practice whenever you please. Mrs. Glendenning will be glad to see you. We'll keep it all to ourselves until we can surprise your husbands."

"Oh! that will be splendid! And you'll really do it, Judge?"

"Certainly I will. There's nothing I'd enjoy better. Why, my dear, you've struck the right chord! I never thought of it before."

"Thought of what, Judge?"

"Of bringing in the wives and sweethearts and sisters. It's because these are left out of so many of their pleasures and recreations that young men so often get astray."

A sigh parted the lips of Mrs. Raynor. "And will keep getting astray," she said. "Only a few can have the liberty of your house; the many will still go wandering off to the bar-rooms and billiard-saloons of the town."

"Yes, for a time," replied the Judge. "The little that I can do of myself will be of small account. I may save two or three or a dozen, while scores and hundreds keep on in the old way. But I hope to show the people a new and better way, to give them a practical illustration of what may be done to keep our young men out of the bar-rooms and away from bad company, and to get others to follow my example. And it is possible, Mrs. Raynor, that a change may be wrought in the views of the management over at Association Hall, and that it may see wisdom and Christian charity in a less exclusive and rigid policy as to amusements, games, and social recreations. An odd thought came into my head to-day, and it's been running through it ever since. The Church sends out its missionaries to convert the world. Why may not we send out our missionaries to convert the Church. We can do it—we we outside heathens in Westbrook. We can preach and work and make proselytes as well as they can. I've shaken the faith of two or three already, and if they won't take any better care of their young people than they've been doing, we'll get up an Association of our own and save our young men, and theirs into the bargain. We'll have billiard-tables, and tenpin alleys and private theatricals and a ball-room, as well as a reading-room and a gymnasium. And we'll have a handsomely furnished parlor, in which the girls can meet their lovers, and young wives have a good time over their gossip, while their husbands are enjoying themselves in the reading-room or in some active diversions. And there's another thing we'll have."

"What?" asked Rose.

"A bar-room as well as a billiard-room

and tenpin alley. These, as you know, usually go together."

"I thought you were in earnest," said Rose, a slight shade of disappointment in her tones.

"So I am, entirely in earnest. We'll have a temperance bar, from which ice-cream and cake, tea and coffee, and other refreshments will be served to all who desire them. Creature comforts are very enticing, you know, and are alike attractive to saints and sinners."

"Your fancy has run away with you, Judge Glendenning. All this is too good to be hoped for," replied Mrs. Raynor.

"Talk it up, my dear! Give the ball a start. Set the people to thinking and talking. That's the way. All reforms originate in right-thinking; then come discussion and enlightenment. If the proposed reform is based on right and common sense, a rally of right-thinking and common-sense people will soon be made and the reform take shape and become aggressive."

"Count on me, Judge! I'll set your ball in motion as far as talking will do it."

"But don't strike too hard a blow in the beginning, Mrs. Raynor, or you may only succeed in knocking the ball out of its right course. Touch it easily at first. Try your hand and gain skill."

Rose was a wiser little woman than the Judge imagined. She did touch the ball he wished to set in motion—lightly at first, but with a care and steadiness of hand that set it going in the right direction. Before they were aware of what she was doing, she had drawn a score of Church members, who had sons and daughters whom the Church was not holding away from the world, into an expression of regret that the Church had committed itself to such narrow and exclusive ideas in regard to amusements, and especially that the Young Men's Christian Association in Westbrook should be doing little or nothing for any

but the more thoughtful and religiously inclined. But few of these, after thought had taken this direction, were able to see things in the old light; and the arguments and opposition which they met only helped them to think more intently, and to reach new points of observation from which to gain broader views of the whole subject. These in turn became the open advocates of reform.

On every hand among religious people Rose met exaggerated stories about Judge Glendenning and what he was threatening to do, and corrected them as far as lay in her power; doing it in a way to arouse as little antagonism to herself or the Judge as possible, and at the same time communicating many things which she had heard him say in favor of religion and good morals and in condemnation of drinking, gambling, and profanity. "He is on your side, if you only knew it?" she would declare to the more bitterly opposed, and maintain her position with a skill and womanly tact which was almost irresistible.

So the few weeks passed immediately preceding the monthly business meeting of the Association referred to in the opening of this chapter, and it is not surprising that the hall, as we have seen, was crowded.

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER the meeting had been called to order by the President and a prayer made by one of the clergymen in attendance, the regular routine business of the Association was entered upon and soon dispatched. No one seemed inclined to make trifling issues, or to have a wordy contest over things of minor importance.

"We are now ready for any new business," said the President, his voice breaking in upon the stillness of the hall almost like a challenge of battle.

Then came a pause, a brooding silence, and the sense with many of an impend-

ing storm. Nearly a minute passed in waiting and expectancy. At the end of this time a member of the Association who was sitting near the President's chair arose. He held in his hand a small slip of paper, from which he read the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That a Committee of five be appointed to take into consideration the whole subject of amusements, their relation to the Church, her duty in regard to them, and their value as a means of keeping the children of the Church within her protecting influence, this Committee to report at the next monthly meeting of the Association."

Scarcely had the resolution been seconded before half a dozen members were on their feet, and "Mr. President!" came in excited tones from as many voices. But the mover of the resolution was still upon the floor, and claimed his right to speak first to the motion which he had offered.

"I am sorry, Mr. President," he said, "to have this resolution met, on its simple reading, by such evidences of a disturbed state of feeling as I see around me. Unless we come to its consideration entirely free from passion and prejudice—"

"We don't want to consider it at all!" "It's out of order!" "Lay it on the table!" "What did you bring it here for?" and cries of a like disorderly and unreasoning character broke out here and there, followed by calls of "Order! order!" which were repeated and emphasized by the President. When silence was restored, the mover of the resolution continued, speaking slowly, and with a calmness of utterance that had its effect upon the audience:

"Unless we come to its consideration entirely free from passion and prejudice, it will be impossible for us to give it the grave consideration so important a subject requires at our hands. My motion is for the appointment of a Committee to consider the relation of amusements to the Church—"

"They have no relation to the Church!" "They belong to the world, the flesh, and the devil!" were the interrupting responses; and again cries of "Order! order!" and the quick rapping of the President's gavel rang through the room.

"Those who have the truth," continued the speaker, "can, of all other men, afford to listen patiently; for the strength of truth and the weakness of error only become more palpable when they are set side by side. If we have all the truth on this question of amusements, which many doubt—and the number of doubters is steadily increasing—then we shall be able to set it forth in a clear light. If we have not the whole truth—if, instead, we are holding to many prejudices and errors—then of all men in this community it behooves us to get at the truth as speedily as possible; and it is that we may do so that I have moved for the appointment of this committee."

As the mover of the resolution sat down, calls of "Mr. President!" were heard from various parts of the room, and Mr. Allen, the presiding officer, had some difficulty in deciding which member on the floor had precedence of the others.

"I know all about this," was the ringing declaration of the individual in whose favor the decision was made, "and have come prepared to meet the issue about to be thrust upon us. It is only another effort of the enemy to get a foothold in the Church to break down the walls of our Zion; and I, for one, am going to stand in the breach. I see individuals here to-night who all their lives have stood forth in the eyes of this community as the enemies of God and religion. Why are they here? What does this mean? I'll tell you why and what it means! Like the eagles—"

"I call the member to order!" said Mr. Vivian, in a clear, strong voice, "and protest against the use of any such language. We call ourselves a Christian

body, and should at least set an example of Christian courtesy."

"Order! order!" was repeated by several voices.

"I claim the right to speak without interruption," said the member, appealing to the Chair.

"Mr. — has the floor," said the President, frowning, and with a rebuke in his tones. Thus sustained, the member resumed, his voice pitched to a higher key.

"When we see an enemy in the camp, shall we meet him with soft words or a battle cry? We are soldiers of the cross—"

"Again I call the gentleman to order, Mr. President. He is not speaking to the resolution," said Mr. Vivian.

"I appeal to the Chair against these interruptions, and claim that I am speaking to the resolution," cried Mr. —.

"Mr. — has the floor!" was again declared by the President, and with a stronger emphasis in his manner.

"Then I appeal from the decision of the Chair," said Mr. Vivian. A vote on the appeal was taken amid much excitement, and decided against the Chair. Considerable disorder followed, which was allayed by a motion to adjourn. This was lost. Judge Glendenning then arose, and addressing the Chair, said:

"I am not a member of your Association, and can only speak through courtesy. I have a few things that I would like to say here to-night, and ask your consent to say them. I will not keep you long."

Mr. Allen frowned, moved uneasily in his chair, and looked a decided negative.

"It is scarcely in order, Judge; but I will let the meeting decide."

An affirmative decision was made after a sharp conflict of words, in which some of the opposition indulged in certain forms of pious profanity which, with a few verbal changes, might have more befitted the bar-room of the Grant House than the hall in which they were uttered.

"Thank you, gentlemen, for this privi-

lege," said the Judge, speaking with quiet dignity. "I am not here by accident, nor from curiosity. Having learned that a resolution like the one now under consideration was to be offered this evening, and feeling that the safety and well-being of many of our young men were involved in its decision, I determined to come and ask the privilege of saying a few words in its favor. I am not what is called a religious man; but I have tried to live among you as a just man, and to keep myself free from wrong toward my neighbors. I have not been a church-goer. It might have been better for me if I had; but the fault is not all my own."

"I call the gentleman to order," cried Mr. —, who had himself been ruled out of order a little while before. "He is not speaking to the resolution."

"Beg pardon, Mr. President," said the Judge, smiling, and without apparent annoyance. "I will speak to the question as directly as I can. It is one in which I feel greatly interested, because, as I have just remarked, the safety and well-being of so many of our people are involved in your final decision. I trust, therefore, that you will pass the resolution, and select five of your wisest men to consider and report thereon. What we greatly need in Westbrook is a place where, after the day's business is over, our young men can have innocent and healthful recreation, and be free at the same time from evil and debasing influences. For lack of this, many of them—some belonging to Christian families—go annually to ruin. Your Association is excellent in conception and has done a large amount of good; but it is not broad enough; does not come down to the common needs of our young people; saves only those who, from temperament or careful home-training, may be least in danger of going astray, while the large majority are left to take their chances; and what these chances are, we who have been exposed to them from youth and early manhood know, Mr. President, but

too well; the marvel is, that so many escape disaster. But the wrecks that meet our eyes on every hand are sorrowful to behold."

By this time the Judge was beginning to make an impression. The signs of restless annoyance with which many had greeted him when he began speaking no longer appeared, and there was a hush of attention throughout the hall.

"As I look over this assemblage to-night," he continued, "I see at least five young men who from childhood have been surrounded by religious influences. They are members, I presume, of this Association. But let me warn you, sir, that, from some cause, you are losing your hold upon them. Your reading-room, your lectures, your prayer-meetings, and your gymnasium have ceased to interest them, and they are slowly drifting out into the world. I speak, sir, of what I know!"

There was a marked sensation throughout the audience, and a turning here and there to see who were meant. From one or two came protests and interruptions, but they were quickly silenced by cries of "Order!" The Judge went on:

"Will you do nothing to hold within the safe purview of your institution these excellent young men? I say 'excellent young men,' for I know them well, and it has concerned me to see them, as I have often seen them of late, in the billiard-saloon and tenpin alley of the Grant House."

A still stronger sensation in the audience.

"Not," said the Judge, "that I see anything wrong in billiards or tenpins."

"Nor in horse-racing and card-playing," was heard in a half-repressed voice.

"They are as innocent in themselves," he went on, not noticing the interruption, "as chess or checkers, and far more healthful. Young men who are full of life and spirits want something active and exciting in their recreations; and if you will not provide for them, depend upon it,

somebody else will. Not as you would do it, in the hope and effort to keep them pure and innocent and within the Church, but too often with the end of corrupting and defiling them in order to make gain of their debasement and ruin. So far it has rarely happened that I have seen the young men of whom I have spoken in the bar-room, or mingling with the company usually to be found in taverns and saloons. A pleasant game of billiards or a more active contest in the tenpin alley appears to have been the sole attraction. But how long do you think they will continue their visits to taverns and saloons without demoralization. It is hard to touch pitch and not be defiled! Sir! if you would save the young men of this town, you must at least be as wise as those who are seeking to destroy them. If you cannot hold your own, nor gather in from those who stand without, by the agencies now employed, seek for still more attractive agencies, and that right speedily. Have your billiards as well as your chess-tables; your bowling-alley as well as your gymnasium. And if by means of other innocent games and amusements you can gather a still larger number nightly within your rooms, let me urge you to introduce these also. Remember, that your special work is among the youth and young men of this community. Are you doing your best to save them? Are you going down to them, and trying to take hold of something in them that you may lift them up into higher places, or only sitting in stately dignity, indifferent to the salvation of any and all who will not come up and sit with you above the world and its innocent pleasures?"

The speaker who followed Judge Glendenning was a clergyman. He deprecated the discussion of the question now under consideration. "No good can possibly come of it," he said, "but only hurt to the cause of vital piety. There can be no compromise between the Church and the world without loss to the Church.

Amusements do not belong to the Church, only sacred and solemn things. Life is too precious to be wasted at billiard-tables and in tenpin alleys. It was for the saving of young men's souls that our Association was established, not to provide them with profane and worldly amusements. If this work is to cease, then I for one shall withdraw from membership in your Association, and wash my hands clean of the whole affair! I for one hold a higher loyalty to the service to which I have consecrated my life! The Master didn't go about to amuse people. He had a more serious and solemn work on hand. Do not let us forget this, brethren. If we would be His servants, we must walk in His footsteps."

Mr. Vivian arose as his fellow-clergyman sat down. "Brethren," he said, "let us be sure about this matter of walking in our Master's footsteps. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and He tells us that there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just men who need no repentance. It was for the single stray sheep that the shepherd was most concerned, and he even left the ninety and nine who were in the fold that he might go into the wilderness and recover the one that was lost. All around us are straying and lost sheep, and the wolves are hard after them, wounding some and slaying some. What are we doing for their rescue? Anything or nothing? Our fold may be strongly inclosed and safely guarded, and the pastures may be sweet and good, but if some of the sheep be willful, and if some have a craving for food which we have not provided, and go off seeking for it in the wilderness, shall we leave them to the mercy of the wolves, or go after them and bring them back, and tempt them to stay by more enticing pastures?"

"When I was a boy, Mr. President, physicians were not as wise as they are to-day. Their business is, as you know, to cure sickness and to save the bodily life

when assaulted by disease. At the time to which I refer, the desire or craving of the sick man was almost always denied by the physician. His appetite, if it took any peculiar direction, was pronounced morbid, and to gratify it was considered little less than signing his death-warrant. A good draft of cold water to the fever patient who longed for it with an irrepressible longing, night and day, a pickle or sour lemon to the poor, wasted sufferer who turned with loathing from the most dainty food that was held to his lips, and asked only for what was perpetually refused, these, and scores of other things asked and pleaded for, were denied, while toast-water and slops and all manner of tasteless things were offered and rejected with loathing, the poor sufferer often dying with the name of the craved-for article on his lips, or gaining it through pity when all hope of recovery was gone, springing back to life almost at a bound by means of the very thing that nature knew so well was needed for his restoration. Now, as physicians of the soul, it is quite possible that we may be no wiser to-day, in our dealing with some of the aspects of moral and spiritual disorder, than were the doctors thirty or forty years ago. If men cannot or will not be cured of their bodily infirmities under the old dogmas of the schools, wise physicians abandon these old dogmas and adopt new and more enlightened methods by which to cure their patients. And so, if men cannot, or will not, be healed of their spiritual infirmities under the treatment so long and so rigidly prescribed by doctors in the Church, shall they be left to perish? Is the method of more account than the patient—the dogma more sacred and of higher value than the soul? Do not misunderstand me. When I say dogma, I do not mean a divine precept; that is immutable, and without obedience thereto spiritual health is impossible. What I mean by dogma is an authoritative declaration of truth by men who formulate dogmas. If the men be

wise and good men, their precepts of life will run closely side by side with the spirit of our Lord's precepts. But if they be ignorant or prejudiced, or narrow and bigoted, or if they be not true and good men, then their dogmas, if followed, may lead away from, instead of toward, the living and healing fountains. Brethren, it behooves us to consider well whether in all things we be following the Lord in our work of saving souls, or suffering ourselves to be limited and hindered by the commandments of men. In this matter of amusements I fear that we are so limited and hindered, and that we might protect, rescue, and save many souls if we used them more freely and with a wiser discrimination, as servants of the Lord."

"Do you call a billiard-table a servant of the Lord, Brother Vivian?" asked the clergyman who had preceded him, speaking with considerable asperity of manner.

"All innocent things, when used for good to man, are servants of the Lord," replied Mr. Vivian. "Our brother has spoken of billiards. May I ask him to state, for the information of this meeting, in what the sin of billiards consists?"

"For shame!" cried the brother clergymen.

"I move to adjourn!" came from an excited member.

But the motion was voted down by a large majority. Mr. Vivian resumed his

address, but met with so many interruptions that he found it impossible to make himself heard and clearly understood. Amendments of the most incongruous character were offered, one of them to the effect that the committee be instructed to consider and report on the propriety of changing Association Hall into a circus; another called for a report on the relative spiritual value of card-playing and prayer-meetings; and another for a declaration by the Association against all amusements as inconsistent with a Christian profession.

By this time it was clearly apparent that a fair discussion of the question before the meeting was no longer possible, and a demand was made for the previous question, which was voted on by yeas and nays, resulting in a decided majority for the resolution calling for a committee to consider and report on the whole subject of amusements as they stood related to the Church.

In the choice of a committee, which was not left to the discretion of Mr. Allen, the President, much time was consumed and no little bitterness of feeling brought to the surface, but the liberal party succeeded in getting well represented. After one of the most prolonged and excited business meetings ever held by the Young Men's Christian Association of Westbrook, an adjournment was reached and the members retired to their respective homes.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

RELIGIOUS READING.

CONSIDER THE LILIES.

A LAY SERMON.

HE raised his deep-set, melancholy eyes, and looked at me with something of doubt and something of bewilderment in the expression of his face, as though not clearly apprehending the drift of what I had said, or as not seeing in it any direct bearing on the questions that were troubling him.

He was a student who had recently graduated from one of our theological schools and was about to enter the ministry, a young man twenty-five years of age, with a large, active brain, which had been overworked during the years of his collegiate course and now greatly needed rest. But instead of taking a few months for change and recreation, he had put himself down to the severe and more difficult work of lifting the creed and doctrines which he had accepted on authority, and which were little more to him than dead forms in the memory, into a clear and rational faith to which all the higher perceptions of his mind could give a free and hearty assent. Until able to do this was he really fit to become the spiritual teacher and guide of others? This thought was forcing itself upon him and troubling him greatly.

As might be supposed, he found the task on which he had entered far from being an easy one. Nay, it became, as he pursued it, more and more difficult all the while; for he was toiling with an honest heart over abstract propositions, and working amid the concrete results of human intelligence, and trying to harmonize things which grew more and more discordant the closer he brought them together. He was in despair.

"What am I to do?" he had asked. "I am like one drifting away upon an unknown sea, without a compass in his vessel or a rudder at the stern."

And I had merely answered:

"Consider the lilies."

He shook his head after a few moments and replied in a discouraged tone

of voice, as one who felt that he had been misunderstood:

"No—no. It is not that. I am in no way concerned about what I shall eat, or what I shall drink, or wherewithal I shall be clothed, for my Heavenly Father knoweth that I have need of all these things. My solicitude lies far away from these external and common affairs of life. It is as to the doctrine, whether it be true, that I feel this deep concern. A preacher of righteousness should be well assured as to the truth of what he utters."

Quoting from John vii, 17, I said:

"If a man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

There came a quick lighting up of his face.

"Can any other man really know of the doctrine?" I asked. "Can it be to any other man more than an intellectual formula?—anything more than something in the memory and thought?"

My young friend dropped his eyes and sat thinking for some time.

"You have lifted the passage into a new significance," he said, as he looked at me again. "But what has this to do with considering the lilies?"

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.' If this be really so, must we not look for some higher meaning in this beautiful saying than a simple assurance that all our natural wants will be continually supplied by our Heavenly Father? Must not the spirit and life of His words lie farther down than that? Let us see if we cannot find a deeper lesson in considering the lilies, which neither toil nor spin, and yet are clad in garments more beautiful than those in which Solomon arrayed himself when in the height of his kingly glory. The garments of Solomon were the work of human hands—of the toiler and the spinner—beautiful on the surface only. Below that nothing was to be found but unsightly shreds, and bits of wool, silk, or

linen, and these had no life, for man, in order to make them into something of his own, had broken their connection with life. It was out of dead materials that he had woven these beautiful robes. But the garments in which the lily is clad are an outgrowth from within. Perfection and beauty are not on the surface of its fair petals alone, exquisite in softness and delicacy of texture as they are. Every unfolding, as we go toward the centre of its life, reveals a new perfection and a new beauty. The garments in which it is clad are but a revelation of the hidden life and marvelous order and beauty within. How different from the raiment of Solomon!"

"As different as the works of God are from the works of man," he replied. "But still I am not able to connect all this with the subject on which we were talking. What has considering the lily to do with settling great and perplexing questions of doctrine?"

"Heavenly truths come to us by revelation, and are contained in God's holy Word. To understand these truths we must have doctrines, which may be called the external forms, or garments of divine truth clothing them, and at the same time revealing their order, connection, and beauty. Now, I think you will see that if men from their own intelligences attempt to construct a religious faith out of such passages of Scripture as happen to favor their peculiar ideas, habits of thinking, or educational bias—toiling among dimly seen and but partially understood truths, and weaving their impressions, reasonings, and conclusions into a system of doctrines—that the chances are largely in favor of their work being more like the raiment of Solomon than the living vesture of the lily."

He was looking at me with a fixed, earnest gaze, and I noticed a softer expression coming into his melancholy eyes.

"There is one way, and only one, by which you can arrive at a settlement of the great conflict now going on in your mind as to the truth of doctrine," I said. "You will never do it by mere intellectual toiling and spinning, though you labor until bent by the weight of years. Few men at sixty-five are as certain about the claims of dogmatic theology as they were at thirty-five. And it is notice-

able that the closer men get in their lives to the spirit of our blessed Lord's teachings, the less tenacious they are about these Solomon's robes which men have too often woven out of the mere shreds of truth. If you would be certain whether the doctrines you are going to teach are true or not, you must seek for enlightenment in another direction from that in which you have been going. By no mere intellectual efforts, by no study and comparison of systems of faith, by no effort of human reason alone, can you ever come into a state of illustration sufficiently clear to lift you above all doubt in regard to the truth."

"How then?" he asked.

"If a man will *do His will*, he shall know of the doctrine."

Again I saw his grave face light up quickly.

"Of what use is doctrine?"

He did not reply for some moments. Then he said: "To show us the way to Heaven."

"And your end in acquiring doctrine is that you may be able to point out this way to others?"

"Yes."

"Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' Did it never occur to you that in trying to find the way to Heaven men go oftener to Paul than to Christ?"

He looked at me, half in surprise and half in bewilderment.

"Which, think you, knew best the way that leads to Heaven?"

"They cannot surely be at variance in their teaching!" he said, a slight huskiness coming into his voice.

"But why not go direct to Christ in the gospel instead of seeking to find Him through Paul? Why not take His simple and easily understood doctrine of repentance and obedience, instead of the Pauline abstractions about faith, merit, and substitution? How many sermons have you written?"

"None, yet, to my own satisfaction," he replied.

"Doctrinal, as far as you have gone, I presume?"

"Yes," after a slight pause.

"Not a text from the Psalms or the gospels. All from Paul or Peter."

"No, not all."

"How many from the gospels?"

"One." There was a falling inflection in his voice.

"May I ask you to repeat that text?"

"It is in Luke vii, 50: 'Thy faith hath saved thee.'"

"What was your line of thought? Did you attempt to enforce the old Pauline doctrine that men are saved by faith alone? or the older doctrine of Christ, that salvation comes through a life in obedience to the commandments? 'If ye would enter into life, keep the commandments.'"

There came into my young friend's countenance an almost blank expression.

"Were you wholly satisfied after you had wrought out your argument to the final conclusion that through faith alone a man might become pure and holy and fit for the society of angels?—that the Lord, who says: 'Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings,' would accept a mere act of faith in the place of righteous living?"

"No," he answered, with a gloomy shake of the head—"no, I was not satisfied. All my deeper convictions were in conflict with this conclusion."

"Would you rest your own eternal safety on such a doctrine?—be willing to take Paul's way of salvation, as the Church has understood and formulated it, instead of Christ's way?"

"I think not," he replied.

"Then, my dear young friend," I said, "in entering upon the work of the ministry, which is the great and responsible work of drawing men away from the evil influences of hell and leading them heavenward, waste no time over perplexing theological questions. Let Paul alone until you are over fifty years of age, and study Christ. Sit humbly at the Master's feet. Learn of Him who was meek and lowly of heart. Repress any ambition which you may feel to win a distinguished place in the Church, or to be known as an eminent theologian. Is the love of distinction and eminence, of place and power, in a minister less a selfish and worldly love than the same love in a politician? Will not this love, unless condemned in the heart and rejected in the life, bar the gates of Heaven as surely in one case as in the other? Nay, standing in greater light and professing a higher purity and self-abnegation, is not the ambitious min-

ister in even greater peril of soul than the ambitious statesman or civilian? Take up the gospels and read and study them prayerfully. Try to get imbued with their spirit, the spirit of unselfish love. As I have said, let Paul alone for awhile. He will only lead your mind into deeper perplexity. Resist and put away, as evil, and therefore displeasing to God, all selfish and ambitious purposes. In looking forward to the ministry, and in entering upon it, let your end and aim be the salvation of human souls. Get near to Christ by keeping His words, then you will know of the doctrine whether it be of God. Then you will see that the way of the commandments is the way of life; and in the work of leading men into this way you will find your freedom enlarged, your spiritual sight clear, and all your convictions lifted out of the troubled and shadowy regions of doubt and disputation. Then will the doctrines you believe and teach be as the beauty and fragrance of the lily, clothed upon from a life within; one with that life, and the outward and visible expression of that life. Their truth and harmony will be perceived by an inner sight, made clear through illustration from the Word of the Lord which you have taken into your heart through obedience. There is, believe me, no other way than this by which a man may absolutely know of the doctrine whether it be true. All faith is but a dead form in the memory and below the region of spiritual perception until obedience gives it life and a saving power."

All the while that I was speaking, I saw the shadows falling away from his countenance and a new and brighter expression coming into his face and eyes.

"But are we not to give ourselves to the study of divine things?" he asked. "Must we not bring to them our thought and reason?"

"Unless this be done we can never really know anything about them. To think is to see mentally, and to reason is to take account of what we see and to consider and determine its nature, quality, and relations. If we merely see a thing, what do we know about it? A doctrine in the memory is only a dead something which the mental eyes see. We cannot know whether it be true or false until it is subjected to a rational consideration,

and not even then, with anything like absolute certainty, unless reason be enlightened from within. There must be the witness of the Spirit."

"Who may be sure that he has this witness of the Spirit?"

"Only those who do the will of Him who promised to send the Comforter—the Spirit of Truth. 'He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance which I have said.' Unless a child begin at the alphabet and learn to spell and read, how is he to become acquainted with the knowledge stored up in books? Or how shall a man enter into the higher mathematics except through the door of simple numbers? And think you that a heavenly science can be learned or heavenly wisdom gained in any other way? He who would come into the Kingdom of God must humble himself as a little child, and learn the simple alphabet of religion; not exalt himself in the pride of his intellect, and endeavor to wrest from dark passages of Scripture in which truths have been hidden by the Lord until the fullness of time under the outer clothing of a Divine symbolism a partial meaning of his own."

"It is all growing clearer," he said, a softer quality in his voice. "We must come to Christ as little children, and learn of Him, if we would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

"But how are we to come to Christ?" I asked.

He did not reply for some moments, nor until I had said:

"From every pulpit in the land falls the invitation, 'Come to Christ!' 'Come and be washed from all your defilements!' 'Come and be made whole!' 'Come and be healed!' But where are those who have been washed from all their defilements? Who have been made spiritually whole? Who have been healed of all their infirmities? Have you met with a single person whom you regarded as so washed clean, so made whole, or so cured of the soul's sickness? What then? Is the promise to the ear only and not to the heart?"

"Is there any other way of approaching Christ except through humble and earnest prayer?"

"I doubt," was my answer, "whether prayer really brings any one nearer to God."

My young friend looked surprised, almost startled.

"We come nearer to God as we grow more and more like Him; but it is not by prayer that we attain unto this likeness, but by a life of obedience to His words. If we would come to Christ that we may have life, we must try another way. Prayer, if sincere, will raise our thoughts to God and bring us into states of sanctity and humiliation, and open our hearts to holy influences and the reception of Divine blessings. But only a life made pure by doing the will of the Lord can actually bring us near to Him. There is no other way of coming to Christ. But so many thoughts crowd upon me that I am keeping back the few more words which I desire to say about certainty of belief in regard to the truths of doctrine."

"You scarcely need to say them," was his answer, the voice even and restful. "I must come to Christ in His Word, and, as a little child, take my first lessons from Him."

"Yes; the first plain lessons of sincerity, justice, self-denial, humiliation, and obedience. No matter to what spiritual scholarship you may hereafter attain, these elements of regeneration will be as essential to your Christian life and true power as a minister, as the alphabet to a scholar or the numeral figures to a mathematician. Learn, even as a little child, of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, the first essential truths in the doctrine of salvation, and strive to bring them into your common life and work as fast as they are learned, and then you will have an illustration and a power in preaching which you can never get in any other way. There will be no more trouble about abstract points of doctrine, for doctrine will gradually take form and coherence from that inner enlightenment which comes to every one who in the heart and life draws near to God. It will then be as the raiment of the lily, beautiful to look upon, and sweet with the fragrance of that Divine compassion and love."

T. S. ARTHUR.

MOTHERS.

"THE FIRST LIE."

"THE first lie my oldest child told was a most fortunate one," said a mother, whose faith in her five children might be supposed to rest on an unblemished record for veracity and all the other virtues.

"You don't mean—" began one mother; "And did she ever tell another?" said a second, speaking at the same time.

"Oh! yes," to both at once. "She has told dozens, and so have the rest of them."

"I thought," hesitatingly said one, "they were remarkably truthful children. I am very careful about my boy," and she looked anxiously out upon the group of children as though she must guard her own by watching him, if she was restrained by politeness from calling him to her side.

"I believe they are," was the reply; "but I am sure if I had not learned a lesson at the first, I should be much less sure of them than I am now."

If one young woman of the party had not been the proud possessor of her first baby, who had, as yet, only evinced intelligence enough to cry for its dinner, it is probable the mother of five would not have been called upon to relate her experience. All the others had learned all they thought there was to know about young children, with, it must be confessed, various results in opinions as well as in children. In most of the cases it was evident the child had formed the opinion. The young mother had, however, nothing but theories thus far. Unalterable as she thought them, she was constantly seeking corroboration from the experience of others, and, being a very sensible woman, did not disdain to learn from any source, so it was her voice that appealed for the story of the first lie.

"The determination to never tell my children a falsehood or anything approaching one was perhaps the only part of my preconceived plan for infant training that I was successful in following out. All the rest was swept away by the imperative and unforeseen emergencies that began the first hour of my motherhood, and that

have not yet done with waylaying and overturning my theories."

It was apparent that upon this admission the young mother lost somewhat of her faith in the ability of such a weak adherent to principles to give her any "points" worth considering, but there was no doubt but the children were held up as models to others, and she hid her disdain and listened, as the others did also.

"I certainly had reason to be convinced that such a course led to the best of results, for my little girl, always under my care, put implicit trust in the words of her father and myself, and had never told us an untruth. Taking her to my mother's home the summer she was four years old, I was, after a day's absence from her, startled by my sister's gravely asking: 'Do you know what a story-teller Annie is?' Indignant, of course, I yet could not doubt my sister, but I wanted proof. It was forthcoming—overwhelming to others, but to me a lesson that I have never forgotten. It seemed that Annie had been telling her cousin that at her home we had two big, new houses, and that, besides a horse and trap, papa had a big carriage with two horses. On being reproved, she had insisted it was truth; but the crowning enormity was when, being taken to the door to see a brilliant rainbow, she said, with great composure: 'My papa has a much bigger one at home!' The dear baby! How well I remember her delight when, months before, her father had carried her on his shoulder to the corner of the street to get an uninterrupted view of a bow spanning the entire heavens. It was the only one she had, within her recollection, seen, and she had no thought but it was papa's. Happily I thought of this, and in this light of her method of reasoning, I fixed at once upon her two new houses as the ones into which we had moved within her recollection, and the big carriage as the one we sometimes hired. After that I never regarded as a lie a misstatement of the most apparent fact. I have not, as you might suppose, let such misstatement go unchallenged, but, even when I have felt sure the intent

as well as the statement was wrong, I have contented myself with showing the child in what respect it was incorrect, and of how little use a misstatement is. As a consequence, they very early learn to reason upon what they say, and to instinctively shun misrepresentation. They have never been driven into a fear of consequences that would prompt deceit, nor have they been taught that there is safety in deception by having their word accepted, through what I think is a mistaken idea, that to trust a child is to arouse its self-respect. I have come to the conclusion, by watching my own children and their playmates, that the child between four and seven years of age, who is considered absolutely truthful, is, on the contrary, deceitful and less to be trusted than and hereafter than the child that is not afraid to tell an untruth, or who has not learned from bitter experience that the youthful liar gets punished if found out.

"Never, under any circumstances, severely punish a child for telling a lie. Use your skill in detecting untruths to baffle, not to punish them; make it an object in your life to see that no benefit ever results from deceit or lying, but do not provoke a crop to grow in order to cover one transgression."

This was astonishing talk from a Christian woman, and at the risk of exposing the dereliction of her own offspring, one mother asked: "If one of your children slyly takes a penny or two from his brother's bank, and when you ask him if he did so, stoutly denies it, can you escape the duty of punishment? What should you do?"

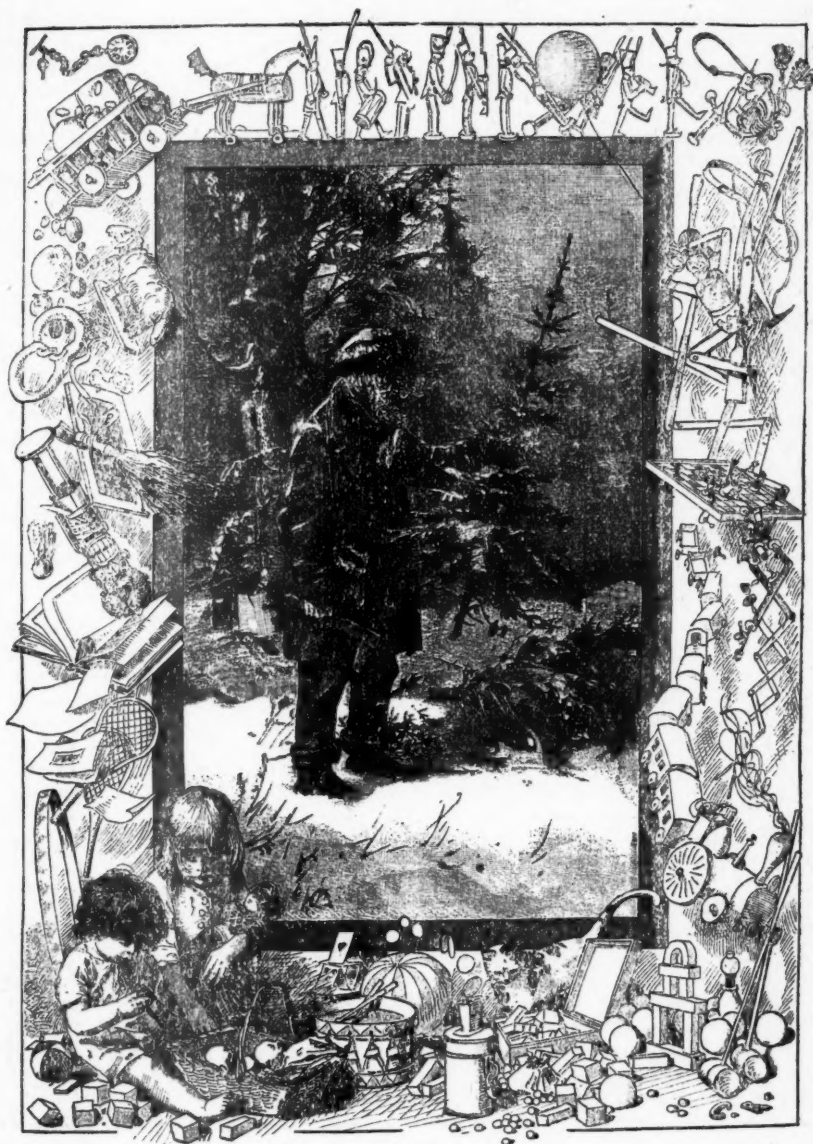
"In the first place," said the other, "I should not ask him if he had done so. I should know beforehand what the child would say, and I should have no right to lead it into the temptation of lying, which he is certain to do to hide an offense that

seems to him more serious. What not to do is easy enough to know. What to do is a matter that should depend entirely upon the nature of the child. No greater mistake can be made than to attempt to govern a household of children by rule. Each child (far more than each adult) needs a law unto itself. What saves one ruins another. One of my children, in such a case as you propose, I should immediately charge with the deed, take the money from it, and punish it; a most effectual method with that child. If it was either of two others I should content myself with restoring the money, expressing my shame that such an act was possible, and my desire that their father and brothers should never know it. If either of my boys was the transgressor I should call a meeting of them all, tell them that I knew what had been done, and announce my intention of punishing all if the guilty one did not own up. I should not recommend these methods to any other mother. No one can possibly know the characteristics of each child as well as the mother, if she will study it; but she who finds herself baffled by one or all of her little ones should lose no time in calling to her help some one with wisdom enough to set her right. Never make the mistake of depending upon any one rule of conduct to carry you through. If you do you will fail with some one of your children; that is, if the children themselves have any individuality of character. Variety, if the spice of life, is also the saving of the race, and it must be made allowance for."

It was evident that the mother of five was in earnest, but no one but the young mother seemed at all impressed with the fact nor struck with the novel ideas, and even her face glowed with pride at the undoubted superiority of her own child, and of her plans for forming its character while in a plastic state.

MAY COLE BAKER.

BOYS AND GIRLS.



A CHRISTMAS IDYL.

DOLLY, ISN'T CHRISTMAS JOLLY?

DOLLY, isn't Christmas jolly?
 Don't you wish 'twould stay all year?
 Is it always Christmas, Dolly,
 Where you come from? Tell me, dear.

Did you live with good Kris Kringle
 In his home so far away?
 Are you glad or sorry, Dolly,
 That you're here with me to-day?

Dolly, isn't Christmas jolly?

Oh! if you could only talk—

It seems so funny that you can't,

When you can laugh and cry and walk!

I'll try awful hard to teach you

If you'll only follow me;

I think you could learn a little—

Come now, just say A, B, C!

Dolly, isn't Christmas jolly?

Oh! if you could only eat!

I have lots of nuts and candy

And plum-pudding awful sweet!

I think you could eat a little—

Just a little—if you'd try;

Would you like some candy, Dolly,

And some fruit cake and some pie?

Dolly, isn't Christmas jolly?

Aint you glad that Santa Claus

Put you in my stocking? I am,

And I think that you are, 'cause

You do seem so awful happy.

Do you love me, Dolly dear?

Oh! aint Christmas awful jolly?

Don't you wish 'twould stay all year?

DAISY'S LESSON.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES.

"DAISY ought to be awake and dressed by this time," said her mother, as she sat down to the breakfast table; "but I don't like to call her—she is growing so fast now, and needs so much sleep."

"Yes," assented her husband, "but you know she is generally down-stairs an hour before this time. Perhaps she is not well; had you not better go up and see?"

Mrs. Neal rose from the table as soon as she had poured the coffee, and stole softly up-stairs.

"I say, mamma," Daisy's roguish brother Theo called after her, "I believe she is getting lazy—sprinkle some water in her face—that will do the work."

Mrs. Neal glanced through the half open door of Daisy's room, but did not speak, as she saw her little girl's pet—a large black cat—standing on the pillow, with paw uplifted over the face of the still peacefully sleeping child. The cat looked intently at Daisy a moment, and then gently laid his paw down on her cheek. She did not stir. Again he softly touched her face, yet she still slept.

Mrs. Neal was wondering what he would do next, when for the third time the black foot rested on the rosy cheek, but this time the tips of four sharp nails were seen to press the flesh, quite gently, to be sure, but nothing more was needed to arouse the little sleeper. She opened her eyes, and took her pet in her arms.

"Why, Jet, did you come to wake me up? is breakfast ready? O dear! does it rain like that?" as she glanced at the water streaming down the window-panes.

Her mother answered her questions:

"Yes, my dear, Jet woke you up in a cunning way, and breakfast is more than ready, and it does rain. Make haste down or papa will get away before he sees you."

Daisy soon made her appearance down-stairs with both of Jet's black paws placed lovingly about her neck, for he was fond of riding in his little mistress's arms, but there was an ugly frown on her face as she sat down to her breakfast.

"O dear! I wish it hadn't rained; do you s'pose it will rain to-morrow, papa?"

"I am sure I can't tell, Daisy, but we will hope not, as it is your birthday."

"Rain! of course not," said Theo; "can't you look a little more jolly? It's too bad to have clouds outside and inside too. Just think how everything will have on its best green dress for the occasion—the meadows and yard, any way, and I'm sure the flowers will *feel*, if they don't *look*, brighter after this rain. Indeed, I am thinking of going out in the rain myself, and see if it won't rejuvenate me. I wonder how I would look in a green suit."

"Very stylish, no doubt," answered Daisy, her ill-humor disappearing somewhat, as she thought how ridiculous her sixteen-year old brother would appear in such a suit.

"Come, Daisy," her mother said, as her father left the house, "I want you to help me now."

"What have I got to do, mamma?"

"You may wipe the dishes, then seed some raisins, and beat these eggs."

Daisy liked this kind of work, and so did not pout over it, as she sometimes did over her work. While seeding the raisins she asked:

"What are you going to make, mamma?"

"A cake."

"I know it will be a good one; when will you cut it?"

"To-morrow, perhaps."

"Now, mamma, I think it's too bad you have everything good when I am gone away."

Mrs. Neal smiled at the aggrieved tone, and said:

"If it is cut when you are not here I will save you some, but I don't believe you will care so much for my plain cooking after you have spent the day at grandma's."

Daisy blushed, for she knew she had a naughty habit of saying when anything did not suit her: "Now this is not good, mamma; why can't you cook things nice, as they do at grandma's?" Daisy was a very good girl about most things, but she had a few very bad habits that overshadowed the good ones sometimes, causing her mother much anxiety.

Her mother would say, "Come, Daisy, do"—this—or that, and Daisy would answer, "Yes, ma'am," but she did not *then*, and in two minutes she had forgotten all about it. One day she had spread her table with her own little tea-set, and she and Theo had been having a grand time "taking tea" together. She had the cream in a beautiful pink glass pitcher, that had been a present to her. When they finished their tea her mother said: "Daisy, clear up your table *now*, and put away your nice things before they get broken, then you can do something else," and Daisy said, "Yes'm," and meant to do so, but she followed Theo out to the woodpile, just for a second, to see how his new saw worked, and that was the last she thought of her dishes for some time. When she did remember them she went out under the tree where she had left them, and found Jet licking the last drops of cream off the broken fragments of her lovely pitcher, which lay on a stone just under the edge of her table. She burst into a torrent of tears, and in great rage picked up a stick to punish Jet, and no doubt he would have received a terrible whipping had not her mother interfered and bade her let him go. "Daisy, the cat is not to blame. You know cream is the only thing he will touch unless you give it to him, but he is so fond of that he cannot resist the temptation of helping

himself when it is left so convenient for him. You are the one who is to blame, and it was your disobedience that brought you all this trouble." Daisy felt the truth of these words, and for some time after this she was careful to obey her mother's commands promptly, but gradually, as the keen remembrance of her loss faded from her mind, she relapsed into her former tardy habits.

The rainy day did not prove as dull as Daisy had anticipated. Her mother kept her busy nearly all day. She gave the house a general sweeping and dusting, to Daisy's surprise.

"Mamma, what in the world are you sweeping and cleaning the parlor for on such a rainy day?"

"Well, it needs doing, my dear, and perhaps we have more time for that now than we will have some other day, and in the meanwhile we might have company."

"Well, little chick," her father said, as he seated himself in his easy-chair that evening, and she perched herself on his knee, "how did you get along to-day? You look brighter than you did when I went away."

"Oh! I enjoyed myself very well, after all, papa. I helped mamma lots, too."

"Well, that's right. You are large enough to be a help and comfort to us both, and that means a good girl. You will be twelve years old to-morrow, I believe."

"Yes, papa."

"Have you anything to tell me to-night?"

It was Mr. Neal's custom to ask his children each evening to tell him of anything that had occurred which had interested them during the day. In this way he taught them to express their ideas properly, being very careful to have them use correct language.

"Oh! yes, papa; I heard a noise in the back stairway to-day, and when I went to see what it was, I found Jet there with a weasel which he had caught. I suppose he came to the door to show me what he had, and finding it shut, climbed up the ladder that leans against the garret window, you know, and was then bringing it down-stairs. It was so large he could hardly carry it, and it almost got away—"

"Escaped, Daisy."

"Oh! yes; escaped from him, and I was just about to run away, when he killed it."

"Did he eat it?"

"No, indeed, sir; and don't you know, papa, he went out again and brought in a rabbit, and laid it down at my feet. Mamma said it was a pity, at this time of the year, but as long as Jet had killed it she would cook it for breakfast." Jet had jumped into her lap and was giving her his paw to "shake hands." "See, papa, he knows I am talking about him."

"He is a very wise cat, indeed. Where is Theo?"

"In his work-room. He won't let me in, nor tell me what he is doing, and I just think he is real mean to treat me in that way."

"Do not judge your brother harshly, Daisy. Very likely he has some good reason for doing so."

The truth was, Theo had been busy all his spare half hours and rainy days for a month or two making a set of parlor furniture for Daisy's doll. He had persuaded his mother to buy a large, handsome new doll for her, and he intended to surprise her with a set of furniture that any little girl might envy. He had shorn stray locks from the Newfoundland's shaggy coat and even robbed the horse's mane in his zeal to upholster the chairs and sofas in style, as he said. He had earned enough money by selling little articles which he had made with his bracket saw to buy enough crimson velvet for the purpose, and finished the last piece that evening.

The next morning when Daisy looked out eagerly at the sky the sun was shining. She joyfully dressed herself and ran down-stairs, where she was pounced upon by mamma, papa, and Theo in turns, and nearly smothered with kisses. By seven o'clock she was all ready to go to her grandma's.

"Now, Daisy," said her mamma, "I want you to be sure to start home at half-past three. You may go again some day, but I want you to come home early this time."

"Yes, ma'am," and Daisy kissed her mamma and started off with unbounded joy. It was Mrs. Neal's plan to have some of Daisy's little friends come and spend the evening with her, but wishing to surprise her, she did not say anything about

it to her. Daisy had two miles to walk before she arrived at grandma's. She found them expecting her, and glad to see her, for she was a favorite with them.

"Them" were Grandma Neal, Aunt Ellen, who was confined to an invalid's chair—a hopeless cripple—Uncle Ben Neal, and old "Aunt Jane," the colored woman, who had lived with the family for years.

"Dear child," said grandma, kissing her tenderly, "I am glad you think enough of us to visit us sometimes."

"O grandma! I never have such a good time anywhere else as I do here."

"Good for you, my little lass," said Uncle Ben, tossing her up on his broad shoulder; "come every day."

"Mamma couldn't spare me."

"Why, that's a fact; you are getting to be a large girl now," holding her away from him at arm's length, exactly as if she were a baby. "I'm afraid I can't lift you much longer."

Then Daisy was drawn down close to the invalid's chair and talked to and kissed by turns. And finally old Aunt Jane came in.

"Bress yo' sweet heart, honey. I's mighty proud to see you. You looks mighty well and peart dis mawnin'. I hopes yo' lef' mammy and pappy quite oncomfo'table."

"They are well, thank you, Aunt Jane."

"Laws, she speaks like a lady. She is eben diserespecable to de old brack nig-gah. Chilluns will dispose deir raisin'. Way saplin's bent—trees declined. See yer, honey, yer's a little gif' fo' you, wid my comments," and Aunt Jane made an elaborate bow, as Daisy peeped into the pretty basket she had given her, in which she saw nine speckled turkey eggs.

"O Aunt Jane! thank you. I was wishing I had some the other day to give my hen to hatch."

"Come here, Daisy," called Aunt Ellen, holding out something carefully wrapped in tissue paper, "see if you think this is pretty."

Daisy carefully unwrapped it and gave a cry of delight as she saw that she held in her hand a picture of lovely rosebuds in a gilt frame.

"O Aunt Ellie! a bunch of the sweetest pink and white and red rosebuds I ever saw. I can almost smell their sweet

breath. How could you paint them so true to themselves?" and she showered kisses on the pale, sweet face.

"It is the one thing I can do, dear, you know," she said, a little sadly; "but I ought to thank the merciful Father that I can do that. It brightens many an otherwise dull hour for me."

"Poor Aunt Ellie!"

"Never mind, darling, sometime I will be rich. I will wait with patience, and do what little I can to brighten earth, for I know there are no useless limbs, neither sorrow nor pain, in that blest Land beyond the River."

Grandma Neal was quite an old lady, but was able to take most of the care of her invalid daughter, and the colored woman, of course, did most of the housework. Uncle Ben took Daisy out with him to look at the colts and calves, and then they went to the orchard, where Daisy looked with longing eyes at the trees hanging so full of "delightful promise."

"Never mind, my dearie," said Uncle Ben, "you shall have all you wish when they *do* get ripe. I must go out in the field now; by-bye till dinner time."

Then Daisy returned to the house and found grandma had laid by a nice story-book for her to read—one that she had liked when she was young. She had not half finished it when "Aunt Jane" came into the little sitting-room and told her to come right along *correc'ly*, for she had done put de dinnah on de table. Then Aunt Ellie was wheeled into the dining-room, and after grandma had asked a blessing, Uncle Ben proceeded to fill the plates. "Aunt Jane" was a privileged character, so she stood behind Daisy's chair and called her attention to the fact that the chicken pie, of which she was so fond, "was jes made fo' yo' sake, chile; eat hearty; and de peas is cooked de way you likes dem, and member to leab plenty room for de strawberries and cream, and de poun' cake and custard pie, kase I jes reckon I tried myself on dem."

"Thank you, Aunt Jane, but I didn't want you to do anything extra for me."

"But I wanted to, honey, and ole Miss' say, 'In course, Aunt Jane, have everyting nice fo' Daisy; it am her birlfday.'"

After dinner Daisy chatted with them all for awhile, and then Uncle Ben went

to his work and grandma told Daisy she might amuse herself in any way she chose. She wiped the dishes for "Aunt Jane," had a good romp out on the lawn with the dog, and several laughing fits at the gambols of Aunt Ellie's pet kittens. When she came in, grandma and auntie were both taking a little nap, and she thought she might as well finish the story. She was intensely interested when the clock struck three. She took no notice of it, but when it struck the half hour she looked up with a start: "Half-past three! O dear, I can't go now. I don't believe mamma will care if I stay just a little while and finish my book, just so I get home in time for supper. I expect that was what she meant, anyhow."

Thus she listened to the voice of the tempter, and it was after four o'clock when she kissed them all good-bye and started for home. She said she would leave her presents and Theo would take them home for her the next day. She had hurriedly walked about half the distance, and had entered the belt of woodland she had to cross, when she saw, near the brook that divided the road, a bird which seemed to be wounded, as he tumbled about on the ground. Now Daisy should have gone straight on home and paid no attention to the bird, as she was already late, but she forgot everything in her endeavor to catch it. She ran and put her hand down to take it up, when lo! it flew quite a little distance and fell again. She had not read nor heard that this was an artifice of the bird (lapwing), to attract attention from its nest, which is built on the ground in plain sight. She pursued it farther and farther with no better success, until suddenly she heard an ominous sound which made her pause. She looked at the sky and saw a dense, black thunder-cloud, which, even while she looked, seemed to burst in fury upon her. She ran to regain the road, but was exhausted when she reached it and could go no farther. She crouched down to the ground, taking care not to stay near any large trees. Poor Daisy! The lightning flashed incessantly, and crash after crash of deafening thunder echoed through the woods. She saw a great ball of fire descend the trunk of a large oak a few yards from her and sobbed with terror. Then a fierce wind raged through the trees, uprooting some,

and snapping the trunks of others as though they were pipe stems, and torrents of rain drenched Daisy to the skin. "I shall die," she moaned; "I'll be killed, just because I did not mind my mother. I would have been home long before the storm if I had. Oh! how will she feel when she finds me dead because I disobeyed her."

Then a thought came into her mind; she knelt down in the pools of water, amid the raging storm, and whispered: "Please, dear Lord! forgive me this time, and keep me safe, and with Thy help I'll try never to disobey my mother again. I am sorry I was so wicked; forgive me for Thy sake. Amen." The violence of the storm gradually passed away, and Daisy began to try to make her way home, though the rain was still falling. Fortunately, she had crossed the brook—she could not have done so after the rain. Very slowly she dragged her weak, aching limbs along, but she finally reached her father's doorstep. Theo was just looking out. "Good gracious! mamma, come here," and he picked her up as she sank, crying and faint, on the threshold. Mrs. Neal was both frightened and astonished. She had not "dreamed that Daisy could be out in that storm, but I had very sorrowfully concluded that she had disobediently stayed an hour beyond the time her mother had allowed her, and then, seeing the storm coming, did not attempt to come home."

She quickly stripped off her soaked garments, dried and warmed her, and gave her hot tea to drink, without asking any questions. When Daisy felt a little better, she did not wait to be questioned. "O mamma! I don't deserve to be taken care of. I was bad, and didn't start as soon as you told me, and then when I got half way home I chased a bird a long time, and then the storm caught me. I thought I would surely be killed out there in the woods. Oh! you don't know how dreadfully I was frightened, but I just made up my mind that if the Lord would be kind enough to save me, I'd never disobey you again if I knew it." Mrs. Neal kissed her. "My poor little girl, the wrong road is a very hard one, and I hope you will indeed forsake it now." When she told Daisy of the surprise she had planned for her, her tears and penitence increased. "I don't deserve anything but punishment; you needn't give me anything."

"I think she has been sufficiently punished already, my dear," said her father.

"And I too," said Theo.

Of course, her friends did not come that evening, but new invitations were issued for the next week. Although her mother forbore to add to her punishment, Daisy never forgot the hard lesson she learned out in the storm that day—that the best thing a child can do is to obey mother—not *sometime*, but *AT ONCE*.

MRS. CORA A. LEWIS.

HOME CIRCLE.

"WHILE WE MAY."

A SKETCH.

"WATCH the hens, Jimmy, my boy! That's right, keep an eye on 'em while you're splitting your wood. And mind that hole in the fence, too."

Mrs. Barnes took time to bend lovingly over a bed of pansies before hastening into the house to resume her place in the monotonous treadmill of morning household work. The sweet flower faces always seemed to look up into hers with smiles of cheer and encouragement, and their quiet influence to follow her through the

worry and overwork of the day. Observing with delight that a new variety was just unfolding a blossom, she quickly loosened the earth about it that the advancing sun might not make too free with its moist roots, and, with another caution to Jimmy, ran in, carrying on her tired face a reflection of the freshness which it took some time for the hot kitchen and wearisome toil to wear away.

"I earn those flowers," she said to herself, and any who saw would surely agree with her. No one who did not love them as passionately as she did would have persevered in raising them amid such dis-

couraging surroundings. The comfortable and not uncomely looking farmhouse would have in itself been satisfying to a much more exacting person than Mrs. Barnes. But Mr. Barnes was, unfortunately, what the neighbors called "a poor hand at keeping things up." He was always a little behind with his work, and never had time to attend to the small details which go so far toward making up the comfort of a woman's life.

The sheds were always in a tumble-down condition; the barn doors always either refused to open or refused to shut. The fencing seemed to stand, such of it as did stand, because it had not quite made up its mind which way to fall. Mrs. Barnes was fond of keeping things in order, but was fast settling down into the despairing conviction that it was of no use for her to fight single-handed against the spirit of shiftlessness which possessed her husband.

The general driveway for the farm lay along one side of the large yard in which the house stood. When Mrs. Barnes first came home to it there had been a slight division fence which had long since disappeared, and for years Mr. Barnes had been talking of the time when he should have leisure to get things "slicked up." But it never came. Stray cattle diverged from the drive to take a nip at lilac and snowball bushes, horses fed and pigs rooted in the grass, until the place wore a forlorn look which made Mrs. Barnes's heart ache.

"A bit of fencing for your flowers, Mary? Yes, indeed, just as soon as we get through the hurry with the plowing;" or,

"Just as soon as we get the corn in;" or, "Just as soon as the butchering's over."

Even in late autumn she petitioned, looking forward to next spring.

"Just as soon as the husking's over and the winter's wood hauled."

So it had gone until Mrs. Barnes's faith in John's doing had slowly given way to respect only for his undeniably good intentions. But even this was growing threadbare as she realized more and more the unsatisfying nature of mere intention.

In a shady corner she tenderly nursed her pansies, the delight of her eyes. She drove palings, tied ropes from stake to

stake, and laid brush for their protection. Things had this year progressed in a manner most satisfactory until one sad day on which the tottering walls of the old hen-house refused any longer to show respect for the props which she and Jimmy applied with painstaking hands. It was during haying, and she knew well that there was no hope of any one being taken from the field force to make repairs.

So she did her best to be ubiquitous, and with Jimmy's willing help (for he shared her love for flowers) managed for some time to fight off the foes which threatened their destruction.

This morning a weak place in the fence on the other side of the driveway, separating between her precious flowers and a number of young calves, kept her uneasy. Many a time she stepped to the door to make sure that all was right, but later the claims of dinner for a set of hungry workers demanded all her energies, and she forgot everything else until an ominous flutter and cackle startled her.

"Jimmy!"—she rushed out with a cry of alarm, to see him at a distance absorbed in faithful effort to barricade a hole through which he had driven back an invasion of calves. But alas! in his zeal he had forgotten the hens, and busy claws were vigorously scratching among the tender shoots and lovely blossoms.

With loud shouts Jimmy put the enemy to flight, and then with his mother bent in grief and dismay over the ruin.

"What's the racket, hey?" Farmer John had come through the bars leading into the stable yard, stopping only long enough to prop a post which threatened to let them down in a body. "Those blamed hens! Why, Mary, I was just waiting till we'd got that hay cut to fix that hen-house, and to think they couldn't 'a' waited a day or two!"

He spoke with real concern. Mary had, with tears in her eyes, been gathering a few of the poor, torn pansies, but at sound of the old refrain a hard expression spread over her face. She threw them down and stood erect, with a comprehensive glance which took in every feature of the ill-kept, slovenly premises. Then, without waiting to listen to John's further regrets over the shortcomings of hens and calves, she strode into the house and began dishing the dinner.

"I'm so sorry I left the hens, mamma," Jimmy followed her with a rueful face, "but, you see, I had to drive away the calf, and while I was fixing the fence I forgot the hens."

She did not soften even for him, and jerked her hand from his touch with a sharpness which almost broke his heart as he went out and tried again the hopeless task of repairing things long past repair.

Mrs. Barnes's face did not relax as she served the dinner, nor afterward while John lingered about, almost wishing she would scold, as she usually did when things went wrong, and then be done with it. But he at length lost patience.

"No use making such an everlasting fuss about what can't be helped," he said, petulantly. "Only a few flowers, anyhow!"

And he tramped away to the fields, leaving her with an added bitterness in her heart. She almost hated him as before her mind passed a long sequence of things neglected which so concerned her. It was not simply the loss of the flowers which stirred her so deeply, but the remembrance of how all through her married life she had borne this burden. All her natural instinct of neatness, every spark of taste and desire for things sweet and beautiful in her home life, which would have done so much to brighten the drudgery of her days, had been continually turned into pricks and stings to her. It was scarcely to be wondered at that her face had gradually taken on the fretful look of one whose eyes are constantly offended by unsatisfying surroundings.

"If I kept things as untidy in the house as he does out-of-doors he'd see!" She felt strongly inclined to try this mode of retaliation as, late in the afternoon, she wearily sat down to her sewing-machine, still resolutely turning from Jimmy's pleading face, as it from time to time appeared at the door.

On a piece of newspaper wrapped around some needles were lines which caught her eye, for her supply of reading-matter was not large. She carefully unwrapped the little parcel and read, listlessly at first, then more slowly and with closer heed. And while she read the cherished anger in her heart seemed to grow weaker and

weaker until she reached the closing lines:

"So many little faults we find,
We see them, for not blind
Is love. We see them, but if you and I
Perhaps remember them some by and by,
They will not be
Faults then—grave faults—to you and me,
But just odd ways—mistakes— * * * *
We may be patient, for we know
There's such a little way to go."

She rested her tired head on her hand, and her mind drifted away in speculation as to how she should be likely to look back upon this most troublesome "mistake" of John's if it should be so ordered that he had but little further way to go at her side. Would not the memory of it fade as snow before the sun, when placed beside his real kindness of heart and his many good qualities? The getting of these very needles in the paper had given him no small trouble, for time and again he had brought home the wrong kinds and sizes, and had patiently and good-humoredly persevered until the matter was right. His fault was a very positive and altogether worrying one, but how many worse ones some men had! Even if it were to tease and perplex her all her life, could she not accept it and bear with it? He never failed her in the matter of quick and tender attention in things which he deemed of real importance. She read again:

"The hands are such dear hands;
They are so full; they turn at our demands
So many times; they do
So many things for me, for you—
If their fond wills mistake
We may well bend, not break."

She cut the poem from the scrap of paper, and read again and over and over the verse:

"They are such dear, familiar feet that go
Along the path with ours—feet fast, or slow,
And trying to keep pace—if they mistake * * *
* * * We may be mute,
Not turning quickly to impute
Grave fault; for they and we
Have such a little way to go—can be
Together such a little while along the way,
We will be patient while we may"—

then pinned it on the wall over the machine and went out the door with a face from which all hardness had passed. She had not seen Jimmy for hours.

But the little fellow was not far off. She found him busy over the trampled

flower-bed, so intent on what he was doing that he did not notice her approach until she spoke.

"What are you about, my little man?"

"Mamma?"—he sprang up with an inquiring look at her face. It was reassuring, for his own cleared to sunshiny brightness.

"Why, see, mamma, I'm picking out the flowers that are left and planting them in these boxes. Then we can keep them where they'll be safe. You'll like them, won't you, mamma?"

"You're a dear, thoughtful little fellow," she said, giving him a very loving kiss. "Yes, we'll save all we can."

The two worked together until tea time. John came home with a cloud on his face, cast there by the conviction that things would not be pleasant. But it cleared as quickly as Jimmy's had, as his wife met him with a smile which he knew meant full forgiveness.

He wondered often as he saw her caring for the few flowers which grew under such disadvantages. The doubtful fence between the front yard and the calves finally made up its mind which way to fall, and fell, leaving calves to roam over the turf at will, until Mary felt many and many a time driven to the lines:

"—We can be
Together such a little while along the way,
We will be patient while we may."

"What's all that?" cried Jimmy, running out one morning at sounds of an unusual stir in the yard.

Two or three wagons were being relieved of heavy loads of lumber. Joists, siding, shingles, and pickets lay in heaps in every direction.

"Yes, Mary," said John, laughing at her look of astonished inquiry. "You've beat at last. Just as long as you kept up a little scold, the most I thought of was how soon 't would blow over. But when you turned right round and took to bearing things without a word or even a grum look, I'm blamed if I could stand it! Yes, the fence and things are going up—going up in good style, too!—and the front yard's going to be sodded. It's a crying shame, I think myself, if a woman can't have an inch or two for flowers out of a whole farm."

SYDNEY DAYRE.

CHRISTMAS GIVING.

"OH! dear; I do wish I was rich."
"Now, Flossie, what sudden emergency brings that wish?"

"O auntie! are you there? I do believe I must have been thinking out loud! Well, you know, Christmas is drawing near, and I want so many things for presents. There's at least twenty people to be remembered—I was just counting them up—and there are so many lovely things to be had. I never saw such a display of holiday wares as there is this year, but the desirable ones cost so much money. That's just my present trouble, auntie!"

"Yes, I see. How much have you to spend on gifts, Flossie?"

"Well, to look at the matter from one point of view, I ought to spend at least forty dollars, and, on the other hand, I ought not to spend but ten, because I shall have to deny myself needful things if I do. You see, papa doubles our allowance this one month, so as to have a margin for extras; but last year I spent so much more that I felt it all winter. I gave some exquisite things, though, and got some lovely presents in return."

"Yes, my dear, I remember a dainty plaque that came to me; one's own work is always appreciated."

"The actual cost of that was only a trifle, too, but almost every one does Kensington, decorating, and all such for themselves. I set my heart on some etchings down at Clark's, but they are so dear, I find; though one ought not to be stingy at Christmas, of all times."

"I have sometimes thought, Flossie, that this gift-giving in some of its phases has become a social tax, instead of a pure and loving pleasure. Now suppose you confine your purchases within ten dollars, my dear; get useful things, and see if the outcome is not satisfactory."

"I don't see how I can, auntie. There's a fichu for mamma will be at least five. I heard her say not long ago she would soon need a new one, so I laid the plan away in my mind, thinking that one thing was settled."

"And I heard her speak of the need of some new white aprons only yesterday; and if you will get some Victoria lawn, and lace and embroidery, we will make

them up in my room. The cost will not be half as much as the fichu, and I predict they will be as acceptable."

"I do believe they will! What a planner you are! Go on."

"Oh! you must help. What does papa need?"

"I was undecided between a dressing-gown and a book. He is always suited with a book, but nice ones are dear."

"You can get choice matter in a plain binding, now, and you will be sure to see something in your shopping. Now, if you will get some soft wool yarn—garnet, blue, or scarlet, as you fancy—I will teach you how to crochet mittens and cuffs, and some horse-reins and balls for sister Margaret's children. Also get some parchment paper, and with your deft brush decorate your own holiday cards—sprays of holly, timely legends and carols—a wide field for invention there. Then there are such dainty, pretty booklets to be had for twenty cents or so, and boxes of choice letter-paper, zephyr shoulder-capes, and handkerchiefs all make acceptable presents. You see, I am intensely practical, Flossie, but I have found that the useful gives the most enduring pleasure and reminds most kindly of the giver."

"That is so, auntie, for Cousin Hattie gave me a pair of gloves, and I thought of her every time I wore them. How you have lightened my burdens already!"

"Why, I am laying out loads of work for you for the next three weeks; but I will help you, and enjoy it, too."

"You're a treasure of a guest. How fortunate for me that you came just now. I do believe I can remember all my friends and be neither miserly nor extravagant. But I wonder what I shall give you. Give me a hint."

"No, indeed! you must do some of your own thinking. But, Flossie, how about your other giving?—to Christ's substitutes, you know—they are all about us?"

"Why, I—I don't think I understand you, auntie."

"Well, the poor people; the lonely and sick people; destitute children. There are so many. Surely you know some to whom Christmas brings no added cheer or luxuries or pleasures; some children to whom a doll or picture-book would be a wondrous joy; some washer-woman who needs a shawl or a pair of rubbers;

or a sick person who would be strangely comforted by a few flowers—any, or all of these, Flossie. It is a grand thing to give gifts to the Christ-child in that way."

"So it is, auntie. I haven't done it, but I surely will! I never anticipated so much pleasure in Christmas giving before."

LILLIAN GREY.

MAKING AULD CLAES LOOK AMAIST AS WEEL AS NEW.

MOTHER has a very pretty sateen dress, black ground, with a deep scarlet figure, which needed washing. Of course, we all thought the dress would be spoiled, the color run, and the goods look "linty," but mother washed it clean in cold, soft water (entirely clean water), using soap freely; then rinsing in clean water, using no starch, and ironing when almost dry. The result was highly satisfactory; it looked quite new; was not flimsy, and the water was not at all colored.

Several of the children's half-worn light calico and print dresses were dingy looking. As an experiment, we added to the rinsing water pink or blue Diamond dye, dissolved, enough to tint it deeply, and it freshened up the dingy looking garments until they looked nice and new.

Eva, who is eight, does wear out the feet of so many stockings, and we find it does pay to cut down the legs and sew in new soles. We cut the soles of old *écru* or balbriggan hose, sewed on to the top of the leg a four-inch piece of the same on to dark hose, and we had a good pair of fashionable-looking hose. I know that hosiery is *very, very* cheap, and that many say "it does not pay to mend and cut down hose." Economy is the road to comfort, if not wealth. Little, busy feet run right through the best of hosiery, and a pile of good, nice-looking tops soon accumulates. A very little work will convert them into tidy feet coverings.

Last winter a mother, affectionate, and meaning to be a careful one, daily bemoaned the fact that her three children were almost stockingless. Several long days passed, and this good-meaning woman sat with hands idle, berating the "hard life that poor people must live," and occasionally pitying the "poor chil-

dren who must get their toes pinched with the cold." In a closet a dozen pair of stockings minus good feet lay. In answer to the query, "Why did she not cut them over?" she said—

"She had never learned how; that such work was little business, practiced only by stingy people."

With a husband getting a salary of sixty-five dollars monthly, there was little comfort in that household, and never an entire new or fresh-looking suit ready to be worn when wanted.

The boys' waists always lacked buttons; the baby's aprons and little dresses were perhaps buttoned at the neck by a single button, and the little body was often cold.

The mother wrapped her own feet in rags. My "easy going" friend is not a coarse woman. She was the petted daughter in a well-ordered household and was a bit of a belle and beauty in her young days, and rather plumes herself on being "very saving" and a "help" to her kind husband.

An intense distaste for small economies and a natural shiftlessness which has stilled all ambition and energy has made of her a wife and mother fonder of her own ease and much "talkee" than of looking well into the ways of her own household.

It is well to revive the art of renovating "auld claes," though it is more pleasant to buy new ones, but to do this our purses must be equal to a heavy draft.

ELLA GUERNSEY.

LET US HAVE A CHRISTMAS TREE.

"If only there were some children in the house, so that we could have a Christmas tree!" I have heard this said over and over again, but as there are no children in the house, the idea is thrown aside among the impossibilities. Now for once, for this Christmas of '87, let us remove it from the impossibilities to the possibilities and have the Christmas tree. What! without the children? A thousand times no; we'll borrow the children for the occasion and have a regular old-time Christmas. And we can do this without any great expense, in fact, with very little; and this is well, as the warmest-hearted people are not always the most liberally endowed with this world's goods.

And we will invite all the children immediately around us, rich and poor. Children are alike the wide world over, and it takes a very little thing to please a child. But you say you do not see how you are to have the Christmas tree and the Christmas gifts without the attendant costs, and when you do weigh the idea of borrowing the children, which is a very good idea, considering you have none at home, you cannot but count also a great deal of expenditure. I have asked you to invite the children; it is therefore no more than fair that I also help you out of this greater difficulty.

You must gather together, you young people, who have a good deal of waste time on your hands, and listen to me attentively and see what we all can do. Now, surely there is a Mary among you, and Mary is always a sensible girl. She may have merry eyes and a smiling mouth, but she has quick, clever fingers, and so I constitute her head of the little band, and she must find other Marys for the same office, and what a busy time we will have getting ready for Christmas!

Here in the country our Christmas trees cost us nothing, but perhaps the Mary to whom I am talking is a city girl and will have to pay for her tree. Well, there is the first expense, and not a very considerable one. Now, what else will we have to buy? Candles, of course, and candies, but these last need not be high priced. Little white teeth are not very particular, and some of them do not have any too much even at Christmas. We must have an old Santa Claus for the top of the tree; we couldn't possibly do without him. Well, Mary, do you not think we can manufacture an old gentleman with pieces from the patch bag? Make a rag doll with a round, fat face; paint red cheeks and twinkling blue eyes; make white hair and beard with raw cotton; place a round cap on his head; a bag on his back; fasten the arms to the left shoulder, to the mouth of the bag, and old Santa Claus is ready, as jolly an old fellow as you'll meet in any of the shops down town.

Did you ever see any colored dolls with hickory-nut heads? or tiny cradles covered with cones? To make the first, take a hickory nut and cover it with black stuff, turning it so that the sharp point of

the nut will form the nose. Thread your needle with white cotton and make eyes with the knots; a little red paint or worsted will soon make a mouth; black worsted, fluffed out, represents wool for the head; take a corncob that will stand on end, or cut it to do so, and cover with black; a piece of wire wrapped with black and brought around the body will form the arms, which can be twisted to hold a baby; a cent china doll dressed in long robes will look very pretty in them



after the old darkey is dressed in suitable attire. The cradle is cut out of pasteboard.

Make the bed double, and sew together separately, after having lined the inner portion of one part with any bright material, red preferred. The outside of the other part is covered with pieces of cone.

Next we will make some mice out of apple seeds, and fasten them on to small cards together with some bags of sawdust, made to represent bags of meal. Take apple seeds and run a thread of black silk through them lengthwise, leaving a little out at one end for the mouth, the

other end long for the tail. Then run the silk through that end near the mouth to form the ears; run it through once more for fore feet, this time tacking it on to the card; each card must have four or five as perfect little mice as one would wish to see. Now we must procure some colored tissue paper and make little baskets. First cut out cardboard patterns; crumple the tissue paper in your hand and cover the outside, lining the inside with a lighter color. These baskets when large are pretty filled with paper flowers, which are very easily made; when small a filling of mixed candies will give a great deal of pleasure. One can make lovely little ducks and rabbits out of white canton flannel, and elephants and monkeys out of the dark. Now gather together all the old papers in the house, and pick out the pretty poems, many of them illustrated and suitable for children, and I will show you how to make a pretty, inexpensive scrap-book. The leaves can be made of common newspaper, the stiffest you can find, the backs out of plain, fine, white cardboard, upon which a pretty picture can be pasted, or take common pasteboard and cover with brown paper, then paint the paper a mottled brown, using orange, chrome, and burnt umber. This cover will look like leather. It is well to paint the corners a darker brown, using only the burnt umber. Before pasting the poems in the books, cut the margin from some of the papers and paste a margin in your books, also a strip down the centre of each page. By doing this none of the newspaper will show, and when the pieces are pasted in I promise you a neat looking book for your pains.

Round pocket pincushions, slipper pincushions, butterfly and pansy penwipers, are all very pretty, as are also doll sets in worsted; a single pair of small doll socks will give a child a large amount of delight. I once saw a child crying very bitterly because she could not find a five-cent china doll; she had plenty of handsomer dolls, but the little china doll was dressed in blue silk, and she liked it better than any. How many bits of bright-colored silks are lying about in our scrap bags! Let us bring them to light this year of 1887, and have, as I said before, a regular old-time Christmas-tree, children and all.

L. R. B.

TEXTS FOR CHRISTMAS DECORATION IN CHURCHES.

Framework and boards for texts are best made by a practical carpenter. Judgment is required in giving the proper thickness, in accordance with the weight the board or frame will be required to carry. All wooden framework used for devices is also best made by a carpenter. Less difficulty will be experienced in the fixing, and many suggestions given that will be valuable to the workers.

For a text on a background of evergreens: First decide on the space to be occupied by the text; then have a wooden frame or—what is better—a flat board made to the required size.

Cover the whole of the board or frame with some cheap material (common green glazed lining will answer well), and turn a wide margin of the cloth over the back of the board, and fix with tacks. The sprays and leaves being ready and cut to a uniform size, proceed to fix to the board by working from left to right. In this portion of the work a better result is obtainable if one worker selects the sprays and leaves and hands them as required to the worker using the hammer and tacks; this will insure greater uniformity and save much time.

We give the method adopted by a very successful amateur. A board is first covered as previously directed; the first sprays are fixed to the top left hand corner; strong tapes are then fixed by tacks diagonally across the beginning at the corner. Place the sprays under the first tape and drive sufficient tacks to secure the tape firmly to the board; then place another row of sprays under the tape and fix these also by tacks driven at two to three inches apart, as the fullness of the sprays may require. If each row of sprays should overlap the preceding one, a very even result will be obtained. The board being entirely covered, next add the border. This is best added after the board is covered, as the slightly raised appearance of the bordering greatly improves the work. The letters being ready, proceed to fix them, first ascertaining the centre of the space to be occupied by the text, by stretching a string tightly from

end to end. The letters being constructed from a centre line, the proper height for fixing is at once obtained. Fix the letters with stout nails having broad heads, and avoid driving the nail too far; this will prevent the foliage of the background being too much pressed down.

TEXTS IN LETTERS OF EVERGREENS OR EVERLASTING FLOWERS.

These require a firm background, and the board should be made in the same manner as described for the text, with background of leaves.

If a text is placed at the height of eight or ten feet, the quality of the material used cannot well be judged; hence we recommend those materials which are not costly, relying for effect on accuracy in the work and finish of the letters. The color of the material for the background will be in accordance with the festival or season. Scarlet, crimson, and white are the best backgrounds for evergreens.

Here are a few combinations for grounds of texts:

Board covered white, borders and letters in evergreens, or with border of blue and white, or red and white.

Red ground placed over centre, leaving the white margin for the background of the border. The red may be crimson paper, crimson cloth, flock cloth, or cotton velvet.

Board covered white; red edge may be of cloth or colored paper. For the gold and black border use the printed borders, or illuminate on plain gold paper.

Slip of gold paper placed over the ground, leaving the white space for border. One end shows text finished with printed border, the other with border of evergreens.

The same as No. 1, with addition of gold diaper; the diaper may be added by hand, or gold printed diaper paper can be procured.

For the first covering of the board, white glazed calico, Turkey red, cotton velvets, flock paper, and flock cloth are most generally used. White or colored

paper may be used for cheapness. Colored papers, with diaper ground of gold, are very good. In covering the board, carry the material well over the edges, and (if a fabric) fix at the back by tacks; if paper, use strong paste. If the board is large, and cheapness an object, first cover with paper, using strong paste, and turning the margin well over the back; the paper being quite dry, the ground-work of the text is then added. When using flock cloth or gold cloth, a great saving of material will be effected by placing a slip only of the required width. This first portion of the work should be done very securely, as texts in frames with floral letters are not easily handled, and when finished may suffer in the fixing. The board being covered, proceed to ascertain the proper position for each letter and the spaces for the borders. Then fix the letters.

Taking as a selected text, "Glory to God in the Highest," first set out the work by placing the prepared cloth cut to the required length and width (say eighteen feet long by eighteen inches wide) on a long bench, or school desk when practicable, or—which is preferable, but not so convenient—a carpeted floor. We recommend the prepared cloth, as it possesses many important advantages, can be had in any length or width, does not tear in handling, and the unseemly joints too often observable in paper are avoided.

Paper letters pasted on a paper ground have many disadvantages; the letter expands by being pasted, and the contraction caused in the drying gives a very rough appearance to the work. If paper letters are used, then have the material on which they are mounted very stout.

The cloth being stretched quite flat on the floor or bench, three distinct spaces are required—one at the top and one at the bottom for the border, and a centre space for the lettering. Space the width for the border and centre accurately—say three inches for the border, and six for the lettering.

Stretch a string, first covered with red chalk or black lead, across the length of

the board about two inches from the top edge. When the string is tight, a second person should lift it in the centre, and let it fall suddenly; this is technically called "snapping." A faint line is thus secured; and the operation being repeated every two inches nine faint lines are made.

The parallel lines being described, the border must be first affixed to the cloth, unless it consists of evergreens, when it must be fixed last. The text being eighteen feet long, and containing twenty-two letters, and adding the space of a letter between each word (five), also at each end (two), we must arrange for twenty-nine spaces, and deducting the end spaces occupied by the borders (six inches), the text will require a letter seven inches wide; but as the letters should not be placed close together, six inches will be found a convenient width. We have in this calculation allowed the width of a letter between each word; this may be increased with good effect; and when the distance is twice the width of a letter, put a star between each word. This improves the appearance, and admits of a change of color. The cloth should next be roughly marked in spaces of six inches; or, what is better, arrange the cut letters on the cloth, and mark lightly with pencil the space each is to occupy.

By having all the letters cut ready, and arranging them previous to fixing, even an inexperienced decorator will detect at a glance any error of distance between the several letters or spaces between the words.

The letters being ready, cleanliness in fixing is of great importance. Use strong paste, or paste and thick gum mixed. Do not paste each letter at the back, but spread the paste or gum on a piece of card or any flat surface, then lay each letter as required on the pasted card, and press down gently with the finger; the cut letter will then be evenly coated with paste and the edges quite clean. Place each letter on its proper space; rub down very gently; this must be done not by rubbing the letter itself, but by rubbing on a piece of clean smooth paper first laid over the pasted letter.

HINTS FOR BREAD-WINNERS.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WOMEN.

THERE is no more notable change in the present day than the revolution in woman's labor. The old idea that a dependent woman must look to some male relative for a support is fast losing ground. And wherever we go we see women fighting with their adverse fate, and by their industry are provided with the bread of independence.

It is no difficult matter for a skilled artist of any occupation to gain a livelihood. But there are thousands of women of but ordinary ability, gifted with no fine talents by nature, and who have acquired no particular knowledge which can be made profitable for yielding them an income.

It is for this large army of less favored bread-winners that I have culled from my store of observation the practical facts which I give below.

A lady, residing in a large city, earned a meagre support by working in a shirt factory. One day, while in the street car, two gentlemen entered and the pocket of one's fine overcoat caught in something and was badly torn. He remarked to his companion, "I wish there was a place where a homeless man could have his mending done."

The lady profited by the remark. The slavery of factory life was ended. One room of her home was consigned to the use, and she commenced the business of mending clothing, sewing on buttons, etc., which resulted greatly to her advantage.

A gentleman's death quickly followed his insolvency. A suburban home of two acres was all that was left to the widow and children.

The lady possessed energy, common sense, and independence, and, withal, a strong love for nature. Most earnestly she planned on the future provision of her family, and finally commenced an experiment. One acre of the land was plowed and set out in fine varieties of small fruit, principally strawberries.

With her own fair hands she assisted in their culture. When the fruit ripened it was attractively prepared and engaged to

wealthy families, she thus realizing the highest price. She constantly sought information on the subject, and under intelligent management her business increased until every foot of her land yielded profitable returns. A poultry house and yards were built at the rear of her place, and she supplied her wealthy customers with fresh eggs and fine poultry at fancy prices.

By diligence, perseverance, and good management her business became the admiration of her friends and her family received a good support. An intelligent, invalid lady was, unhappily, a dependent. Incapacitated physically for any labor, her ingenious mind conceived a means of support which was not only profitable to her but was productive of much good.

She lived in the vicinity of large factories, where many girls were employed. The majority of them were deficient in education and culture. The lady organized an evening class of factory girls for instruction in books and manners which increased beyond her ability to teach them.

A woman who was very skillful with the needle had an invalid husband who required her constant attendance at home, yet their maintenance depended on her exertions.

She was impressed with the idea that a simple, durable, cheap-priced class of children's clothing, dresses, aprons, and underwear would find an appreciative market in a large class of hard-working mothers. Sufficient goods of durable material were purchased to commence on a small scale.

Her patterns were simple, her prices low, and what commenced as a small business increased to a profitable trade, requiring extra help. That was several years ago, but the business still flourishes and is the same, nothing but children's plain clothing being handled.

One evening, at a church festival, several wealthy ladies sat in a group taking supper. The cake, doughnuts, and bread on the table were wonderfully light and delicious. They were highly praised by all, and upon inquiry as to the maker

one lady present said they were donated by a poor widow, a church member.

"I should indeed be happy," said one lady of wealth, "if my table were supplied with such bread and cake. But we have to content ourselves with the unsatisfactory products of the baker's shop."

"Your remark is very suggestive," said the informer. "Only to-day this widow was wishing for a change of employment. She has been running a sewing-machine in a tailoring establishment, and her health is almost ruined in consequence. I have no doubt but she would gladly take a few customers for bread and cake. It would not only change her employment, but permit her to remain at home."

It resulted in a happy arrangement for a number of wealthy housekeepers, who were relieved of the responsibility of the bread and cake for their tables, and a still happier one for the widow. At stated times she supplied them with these edibles according to their orders. Her income was greater than while sewing, besides having more healthful work.

Another widow suffered a reverse of fortune and was confronted with the stern task of self-support. She had been a famous housekeeper in her palmy days, being noted for her fine table.

One day, while looking for employment, she was in the office of a relative just at noon, consulting with him on the subject. A boy entered with a box of sardines and some crackers the gentleman had ordered for a luncheon.

"I wish," he said to the lady, "that I

had some of your nice bread and famous cold meat that I so well remember for a lunch to-day. And, by Jove! that suggests an idea! I believe you are better fitted for appeasing one's appetite than anything else. And now, if you will swallow your pride, as one sometimes must when down in the world, I believe I can get you a good home employment.

"There are a large number of business men around here who rarely go home at noon, but lunch down town. A nice luncheon, such as I know you could supply, would be appreciated by many a one. You have two boys who could deliver them. If you have the courage to try it, I will book myself for a daily lunch and will canvass the block and see how many customers I can get you."

The widow undertook this novel way of keeping boarders, and each day sent attractive lunches to a score of gentlemen, who fully appreciated her fine culinary skill.

There is sufficient compensating labor to be had if the ways for obtaining it were but open. Oftentimes ingenuity of thought, determination, and courage will develop a needed avocation, benefiting alike the employer and employed.

It is needful labor that is surest of yielding profitable returns to a person of ordinary ability. The production of fancy work by machinery has reached so fine an art that there are few, indeed, who are sufficiently skillful in this line to be able to earn but meagre wages at such work.

NELLIE BURNS.

YOUNG LADIES.

BOOKS.

MY DEAR GIRLS:—My books are my companions, the friends that while away many an else-wise long and lonely hour. Through them I have visited countless places in home and foreign lands, dwelling, by their aid, in scenes which my outward eyes will never behold. From their pages I have learned many facts which my outward sight or touch can never verify, and with them have thought

thoughts and dreamed dreams which eternity alone can realize.

My books are friends that stand ever ready to serve me. If one fails to supply my need, another offers its stores with no grudging thought as to being first or second choice. They are never silent when I wish them to talk, and they intrude themselves not upon me when I desire silence.

What responsive, unexact friends they are to we who love them! They

never turn away; they never quarrel or complain; are never false; such as they have they give fully, wholly, generously; or they keep their treasures for us until we desire them.

As long as they exist they change not. We, indeed, may change, bring to them our various moods and tinging their meanings with our parti-colored and vari-colored light. We see in them what we have the capacity for seeing; the "pure in heart" seek for that which they love and prize; the cavaliers and censure-lovers read after their kind. Thus it is that a book may be a law unto itself. In one pair of hands it is full of life and beauty, while in another it appears void and mute; to one person it may be a revelation and an inspiration, while to another it is arid and barren.

"A good book is embodied, undying spirit." It breathes the thought, the life, the touch of another soul. We, in reading it, are not alone; we are sharing in the fruits and experiences of another human being; partaking of its best and worthiest. Good books make us feel that purity and uprightness, goodness, truth, and love, are beautiful and possible; they make it seem worth while to strive to live worthily and nobly. Pure, earnest thoughts, coming warm and true from an earnest spirit, strengthen us where we might falter, encourage us where we might fail; they soothe, instruct, elevate, and inspire.

If I read a poem, I, for the moment, am borne myself on the wings of poesy; if an artist is the author, I see with the artist's eyes and feel with the artistic perceptions which govern him. A philosopher, historian, or scientist for the time endow me to some extent with their breadth and depth and interest of knowledge. And if my author is a novelist, lo! I am living in the scenes, suffering or enjoying, acting and feeling, with the characters—not that pass before me—but that have me in their midst, one of and with them.

Friends who can be so much to us, can have such power over us, should be well

and carefully chosen. The best friends—living friends who have voices which we may hear, and warm hands that we may clasp, and warm hearts that respond to our love—are those who touch and arouse the best within us, who lead us away from the lower to the higher planes of thought and feeling, life and action, those who stir us most deeply to good, noble aims; thus it is with our books; those which stir us most deeply to all pure and generous purposes, through which we gain a deeper, larger love of truth and goodness, of God and humanity, are our truest and best book-friends.

"Curiosity is a good reader," says one of my oracles; "conscience is a better reader; but love is the best reader of all; and he who reads with neither love, conscience, nor curiosity does not read at all. He only thinks he reads."

Mourn not if you have not all the books you would like. "Read much, not many things," has been the burden of much advice. The making the best use of what we have, instead of wasting time and substance in mourning for what we have not, is the essence of wisdom. A book read again and again, thought over, talked about, considered and reconsidered, becomes at last one's very own.

Remember that no one thing is alone necessary to supply the needs of the many-sided possibilities of our characters and development. No lack is able to deprive us wholly of that which we need for our growth. Books are not, cannot be in any, not even to the most secluded, all of life, although they may be a very precious part of it.

"When I consider," says James Freeman Clarke, "what some books have done for the world and what they are doing, how they keep up our hope, awaken new courage and faith, soothe pain, give an ideal life to those whose homes are cold and hard, bind together distant ages and foreign lands, create new worlds of beauty, bring down truth from Heaven—I give eternal blessings for this gift, and pray that we may all use it aright and abuse it never."

AUNTIE.

HOME DECORATION AND FANCY NEEDLEWORK.

A CHRISTMAS MEDLEY.

FOR THE "HOME" BAND.

Oh! let's be planning Christmas cheer
For those we love and hold most dear,
For the bells will soon be ringing.

AND let us also have some little gifts prepared, the work of our own hands, for our dear home friends, which, however humble they may be, will speak with a language all their own and tell of the many loving thoughts and kind wishes that have been woven in with every silken leaf and flower and stitched in with every seam and band.

Those who have the means to procure anything they desire that is beautiful or useful to give their friends have reason to be grateful for the privilege, and must necessarily experience a great deal of pleasure in selecting, as their fancy dictates, just the most beautiful and suitable gifts from among the great variety now offered in all our large art and fancy stores; but though we, whose wants are more numerous than our dollars—or should I say pennies?—may be obliged at times to struggle against envy in our hearts when we think of the good we imagine we would do with the money if it were ours, yet we have more than one blessing to compensate for the lack.

One is, our freedom from responsibility, for we are certainly not accountable for the use or abuse of wealth that is not ours. We have only to answer for the use we make of that which is wholly our own; and could we not all do more and better than we do, if, instead of idly *thinking* what we would do if we could, we should promptly set about *doing* what we could do if we would? Until we feel sure that we have made every effort to do so, we have no right to think we should use wealth more wisely than others if we possessed it. Let us look all about us, and we shall surely find those who have good reason to think us more richly blessed than themselves, and who, perhaps, are thinking of the good *they* might accomplish if they had *our* opportunities. Let us count up our "I haves" and be con-

tent to endeavor to make a wise use of every one of them; not only money, time, and influence, but talents, taste, ingenuity, patience, etc.

And that brings us back to the subject of hand-made Christmas gifts, in the preparation of which the last-named "I haves" will be found to be of constantly increasing value the more they are put to practical use. Mingled with a little love and determination, they often work wonders with very ordinary materials. We know there can be no satisfaction or delight in offering a gift that has been chosen at random and paid for with no sacrifice, equal to that which is felt when we see our friends enjoying and using some long-wished-for ornament or convenience which has been—we might almost say—created by ourselves, and over whose creation we have been so happily hurried, precisely particular, and carefully cautious for days or weeks; therefore we know that the larger share of pleasure is ours—another compensation for us.

"But," you say, "these remarks apply no more to Christmas gifts than to many other things." True, but when are we ever so tempted to envy those who have abundant means as at the blessed Christmas time, when all things seem conspiring to prompt in us an unusual feeling of good will to those around us and an intense desire to add to their happiness and comfort?

But this was intended for an article on Christmas needlework, so my little preaching may seem out of place; but if, as I hope, it should inspire some despondent reader to a more cheerful, hopeful effort to make the most of her "I haves" in regard to gifts or anything else, with thankful content instead of indulging in useless longing and envy, I shall be glad that it crowded itself in and gained a hearing.

One seldom needs suggestions or advice in regard to a large part of the more valuable Christmas gifts as they usually suggest themselves, and we know long before the time arrives just what we are able to do; but we often wish we had some pretty



EMERGENCY BANNER.

little object of beauty or utility, the work of our own hands, to offer a loving friend, some trifle that will give pleasure to the receiver and serve as a loving remem-

brance, bringing us often pleasantly to mind in after days, and are puzzled to know just what it shall be.

Thinking there might be many such

among the HOME MAGAZINE readers, I have sketched, and will try to describe for their benefit, a few pretty, inexpensive gifts which may be readily made by any one accustomed to fancy work. They are all simple, original designs, and each one will probably suggest to inventive workers variations that will help in designing other pretty presents.

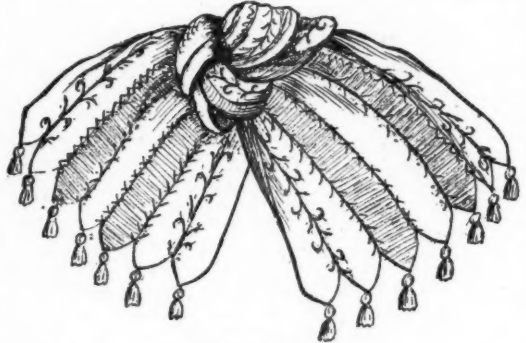
AN EMERGENCY BANNER is shown in the first sketch. It is intended for a receptacle for the various remedies and appliances so necessary in case of accidents, holding them in readiness at all times, so that every member of the family may know just where to go for relief and be sure to find it. Bags for the same purpose have been used for some time, but the banner design is *new* and more convenient; the rod at the top keeps it in shape, with pockets ever open and in position. Use felt, flannel, canvas, stout linen, or any suitable material, and make the foundation eighteen inches long and fourteen inches wide, with a lining of some strong, stiff cloth. Begin at one end and mark it off with chalk lines into divisions, as seen in the illustration. The two perpendicular lines are each four and a half inches from the edge. Cut the lower part in three points, shortening those on the sides a little, and embroider or paint sprays on each. Do the fancy lettering, hem and decorate the pockets, and underlay the space bearing the words, "A Friend in Need," with a thick layer of cotton before putting the parts together. The lower row of pockets is made of one piece of the material twenty-one inches long and four and a half wide, divided in three parts, allowing a little more than a third for the middle one.

The other pockets are each six by two and a half inches, except the one in the centre, which is six by two inches. Baste them on the spaces they are to occupy, and apply bands of the same, or of ribbon, velvet, or braid, to cover the lower edges and divide them. Bind with the same and decorate the bands with fancy stitches like those used on the pockets. Turn the upper end over and hem to the

back just where the upper band comes, and insert a rod seventeen inches long, which may be of any common wood, stained or gilded; add cords and balls as in the illustration, and the banner will be ready to use. Put pins and needles in the cushion, thread, thimble, and small scissors in the shallow pocket under it, and slip a flattened cylinder of cardboard into the large middle pocket in which to stand small bottles of any favorite cure-all. Fill the other pockets with bandages, cots, roll and court plaster, salve, etc.

One might be used in the sewing-room to hold the overflow of the work-basket, or for a toilet catch-all near the dressing-case in a chamber.

FANCY SCARF OR TIDY.—This is made



FANCY SCARF OR TIDY.

of a width of satin a yard in length, to which two velvet bands are applied with fancy stitches of several kinds. It should be fifteen inches wide when finished, with seven points at each end tipped with soft silken tassels. Through the centre of each broad side-strip runs a vine worked in double-chain stitch, like the simplest one designed for the lounge-wrap which is described in a previous number of the HOME MAGAZINE; it should match the velvet in color. It is tied in a loose, soft knot, and fastened to the chair-back by several tidy pins. Left untied, it would do nicely to put on lengthwise or to ornament a small table. It might be imitated in sateen or Canton flannel, which combine very prettily with velvet. A handsome scarf that would bear washing might be made of fine linen crash, fringed at the ends with Turkey-red or

blue bands, and cruel embroidery to match.

A RIBBON PAPER-HOLDER is next illustrated. It is made of three strips of satin ribbon, each a yard and a half long and two inches wide, and a flat stick thirteen inches long, which is covered with satin. Wind one end of each ribbon once around the stick, one at each end and the other in the middle, and fasten securely. Gather them together twenty-seven inches from the stick, and tie in careless loops and ends. They may first

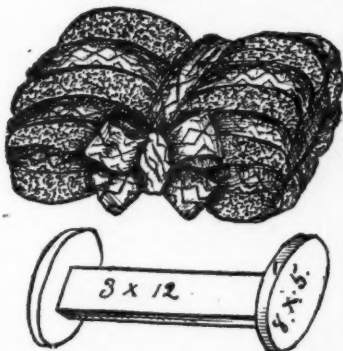


RIBBON PAPER-HOLDER.

be painted or embroidered, but are very pretty without. Three shades or three distinct colors would be pretty. Attach the knot to a handsome hook on the wall, and tack the stick firmly to the wall below, leaving the ribbons a little loose, so that papers can be easily slipped in. One would be ornamental placed near a piano or organ to hold sheet music. A cheaper one might be made of fancy trimming braids, having some of the figures, out-

lined with embroidery silk or bright worsted, and the ends fringed or tipped with tassels. I have seen one made of common picture cord, placed in an out of the way corner for waste paper by a thrifty housekeeper who knew the value of old papers in housework and of time saved.

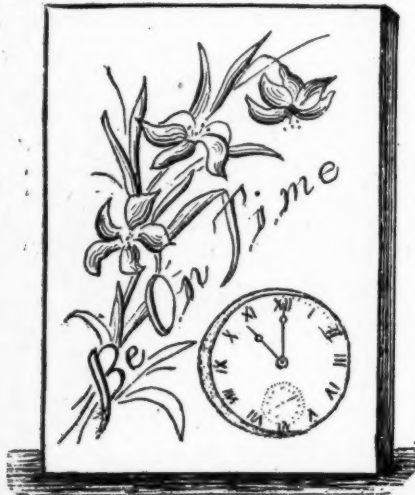
FOOT-REST AND HASOCK.—This will be thoroughly appreciated if made for one who loves to spend the long winter evenings by the home fireside, as it serves as a hassock or foot-cushion when laid on one side, and is equally nice for a foot-rest when standing on one end, being firm and easy. It stands fourteen inches high, but, of course, it might be made longer or shorter according to taste. The wooden standard is thickly padded with hay or excelsior with an outer layer of curled hair,



FOOT-REST AND HASOCK.

and slipped into a strong drilling case made to fit it which has oval ends, to which the main part is gathered and sewn. The cover is made of mottled furniture cloth, striped and tied in with broad fancy trimming braid. The bow should be very firmly attached, as the loops are used to lift and handle it by. The oval end pieces fit the ends of the standard, and are held in place by a circle of tiny, gilt furniture tacks. One would be very handsome made of wool plush, with ends and a strap to encircle it of embroidered satin; or one might be made of strips knit of silk or wool remnants on small wooden needles. One having pieced Roman stripes, to match the sofa-pillow described in a previous article, would be inexpensive as well as pretty.

A WATCH-PANEL is one of the very prettiest things that can be given to one who is the owner of an open-faced watch. No matter how old and homely the watch may be, it will seem like a dainty little clock face when seen through the opening made for it in the panel. The one illustrated consists of a piece of half-inch board, five by seven inches, through which an opening is cut the exact size of the face of the watch—not as large as the watch itself—covered with black velvet smoothly applied, which is turned over the edges and glued neatly to the wood. Cut out a little velvet where the opening

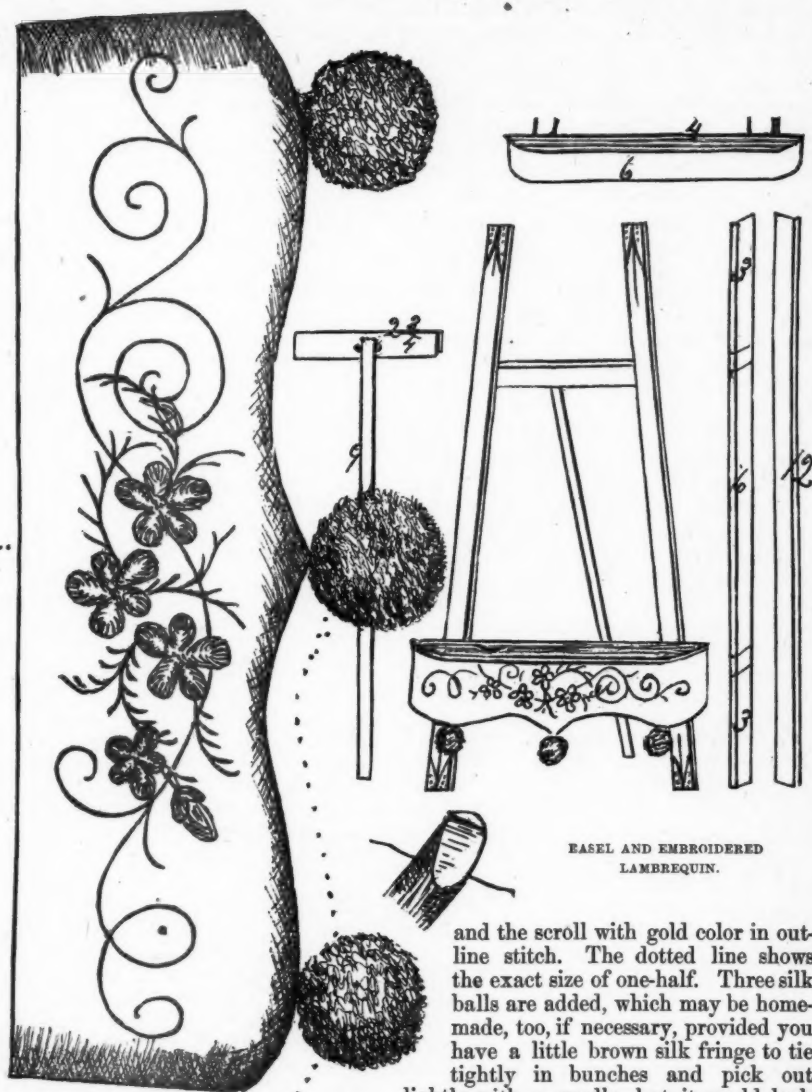


VELVET WATCH-PANEL.

comes, and make little slashes that reach almost to the wood; then put glue carefully around the circle, and press the velvet down closely all around and through to the back. Fasten a little flat hook just above the opening, on the back side, for the watch, and another near the top if a chain is attached. Put a short cord across the back to suspend it by, or a brace if you wish it to stand on a shelf. It looks more like a clock, however, if a bronzed or gilded frame, an inch and a half deep, is glued to the back, as seen in the sketch. The part of the frame at the base is made heavy, and is rounded out a little wider than the rest, so that it stands safely anywhere. The lilies and motto are in shaded gold color and the foliage in shades of golden olive-green.

EASEL AND EMBROIDERED LAMBREQUIN.—If I could place before you the easel from which this meagre outline was drawn, and tell you that it was home-made, you would probably say, as many others have, "That is a pretty design; I would like to make a lambrequin like that if I had an easel," thinking I meant only the embroidery; for the easel itself looks like a nicely made walnut one, even if closely examined, and yet it is really nothing but paper and paste and a few little strips of pine. Those who can visit fancy stores whenever they choose may think it nonsense to make or describe anything that can be obtained for a trifle ready made; but there are many who have no such opportunities who may be pleased to try my directions.

The kindling-basket will usually furnish more pine than is needed; if not, a new shingle may be of service. The two uprights and the short cross-piece are of quarter-inch pine, half an inch wide; the lengths are given in the illustration. The brace is about the size of a slender lead-pencil, the upper end shaped as shown, with a hole pierced through it, with an awl (or even a darning needle). Two holes are also made in the cross-piece to match it, and fine wire is passed several times through and drawn up, to fasten one to the other. The lower cross-piece or shelf is six inches long and three-quarters of an inch wide and thick. Each piece is covered, separately, with walnut-brown tissue paper, like that used for paper flowers—not the thin, old-fashioned kind. Get a sheet of the paper, and cut a strip one and three-quarters by thirteen inches for an upright; lay it on a table and spread thin flour paste smoothly over it; moisten the stick all over with paste, and lay it in the middle of the paper; press it down, turn the ends of paper over, bring the side edges up, and fit the paper evenly on over the whole surface, rubbing out superfluous paste with a soft cloth. Cover them all in the same way. When neatly done and dried, the back side, where the edges overlap can hardly be told from the other. The pieces may be glued together or fastened with small tacks with a bit of paper pasted over the heads. Decorate, if you have it, with very fine lines of thick gilt paper on each tip and on the upper edge of shelf.

EASEL AND EMBROIDERED
LAMBREQUIN.

and the scroll with gold color in outline stitch. The dotted line shows the exact size of one-half. Three silk balls are added, which may be homemade, too, if necessary, provided you have a little brown silk fringe to tie tightly in bunches and pick out lightly with a needle, but it would look very well without them. The upper edge is fastened to the shelf with tacks and turned down over them, and the ends are drawn back and fastened to the back side. Another might be made by varying the shape and covering the uprights, which should be very slender, with velvet, wound spirally with silk to match the embroidery. An easel made of cream-white and gilt paper, with a pale

The lambrequin is of brown velvet lined with stiff net. The flowers and sprays are worked with violet-blue silk,

blue satin lambrequin, and an airy blue bow tied where it would show just above the picture, would be a beautiful present for some lover of dainty ornaments. Cover one with pink, or any fancy shade, and put fluffy, crimped paper fringe, doubled many times, around the shelf, and tie a cluster of small half-blown rose-buds—paper, of course—near the top, and you will have a charming little gift for some one.

I hope all who try to make easels will meet with success, as I did, but I fear all cannot hope to be cheered, as I was when mine was first exhibited, by the astonished and admiring exclamation of, "O-o-o my! Isn't it pretty? How ingenuous you be!"

But never mind; doubtless it will be only because your friends have not sufficient command of pure English to express their unbounded admiration.

I suppose the orthodox finale would be a wish that you might all have a merry Christmas, but as I sincerely hope you may all have, what is far better, a *happy* one—one abounding with peace and goodwill—

I will not wait for Christmas chimes
To bid you all be merry,
For well I know the busy times,
The loving plans, the hurry,
The hidden work, the whispered fun
December days are bringing,
Will brighten many a careworn one
And set the silent singing:

Yes, merry days
And happy times
Will come ere ring
The Christmas chimes.

FRANCES H. P.

COAL GLOVES.—There are few people who have not experienced the great difficulty of putting coals on the fire in an invalid's room, the noise caused from the scoop, or the coals frequently falling from the tongs when these are used, being most disturbing and distressing to an invalid trying to get sleep.

The following recipe for a coal glove is very simple and easily made, and I feel sure any one having once used one would not desire to be without.

This is the way to set about it: Take a piece of paper and lay your hand upon it perfectly flat, spreading the thumb out,

then with a pencil sketch the shape of your hand. The glove is made after the fashion of a baby's, without fingers, only a thumb. Lay the pattern on your material and cut out two pieces like the paper pattern, only about two inches larger all round to allow for turnings and to give plenty of room for the hand to move inside and take up the coals. The two pieces must be stitched firmly together on the wrong side, and then turned right side out. Almost any dark material is suitable, but a piece of black velveteen is the nicest thing to use for it, and if it is bound round the wrist with a piece of bright-colored ribbon and a loop made to hang it to a nail by the side of the fireplace, it is easily seen and always at hand ready for use. They are useful things to make for bazars, and can be made for those occasions more attractive by having "Coal Glove" marked in fancy letters across the hand in silk, the same color as the ribbon that binds the wrist.

A charming sofa wrap for an invalid child can be made of an ordinary cheap, brown, charity blanket, in each corner of which is appliquéd the figure of a little child, two boys and two girls being required altogether. They should be not less than eight inches in length, and must first of all be traced on brown holland, and a thin layer of wadding laid over those parts which represent the clothes. These are made of satin of different colors laid down over the wadding, and caught down to the holland at the edges with overcast stitch. The shoes and stockings are made of satin just tacked down to the holland without any wadding; the faces are made of pink silk, with the features drawn finely and delicately with ink, or pink sticking-paster may as well be used for these as for the faces in Breton embroidery. The hair can be worked in French knots, which are left loose, so that they set in a number of small loops. When all this is done, and little etceteras, such as small beads for buttons, or tiny artificial flowers added, the holland must be cut away from round the figure, and the latter laid on the blanket and tacked down to keep it in position, or else secured with a few touches of embroidery paste at the back. Lines of Japanese tinsel, two or three, according to its thickness, must

be added as a finish all round the figure, and to hide the overcast stitches previously made.

These figures are placed, as I said before, at the corners of the blanket; the borders at the sides are ornamented with a number of familiar animals, simply followed with outline stitch and any brightly colored wool. The designs for these animals may easily be found by looking through the pages of almost any illustrated paper. Agricultural journals generally abound with pictures suitable for this purpose. They should be traced on a piece of tracing-paper first, and the outlines transferred to the blanket by laying the paper in place, dusting a quantity of powdered chalk over it, and, with a large needle or pin, pricking holes all along the outline. By gently rubbing the chalk

over these holes and then removing the paper, enough will be found to have worked through them to enable the outlines to be plainly seen. If there is any fear of the chalk rubbing off during the process of working, the dots can be connected by a white line made with a fine paint brush dipped in Chinese white. When all the animals are finished, a fine, but rather elaborate border of flourishes and scrolls should be worked in and out all round them. The story of "The house that Jack built," forms a capital subject for the ornamentation of one of these blankets. The figures of Jack himself, "the maiden all forlorn," "the man all tattered and torn," and the priest would serve for the corners, while the subordinate characters of the tale can be placed in various attitudes round the border.

NOTES FROM "HOME" HOUSEKEEPERS.

WELL-TRIED recipes, helpful suggestions, and plain, practical talks on subjects of special interest to housekeepers will be welcomed for this department, which we have reason to believe most of our readers will find interesting no less than useful. Our "HOME" friends will here have opportunities of assisting each other by giving timely and helpful replies and letters, and of asking information on any subject they wish light thrown upon. All communications designed for this department should be addressed to Editor "HOME" Housekeeper, P. O. Box 913, Philadelphia, Pa.

FOR CHRISTMAS.

DEAR "HOME:"—It is nearing Christmas, that blessed season which warms our hearts with its sweet spirit of loving and giving, and makes us long for the possession of that magic purse which never got empty, though constantly being taken from. We have one comfort, however; it is not the cost of a gift that gives it value in the eyes of those we love, but the knowledge that they have been remembered. To-day I am moved by the appeal of "Anxious Auntie" to give descriptions of a few little gifts which may be easily manufactured at home, and I trust they

will be acceptable to the many who, like myself, cannot bear to have the happy holiday season go by without remembering at least the members of their own family and near friends in some pleasant way, yet whose store of worldly goods is small.

A very pretty as well as useful "sewing companion" is made in this way. Arrange a generous bow of ribbon, of one, two, or three colors, as you like. To this attach three pieces of ribbon matching the bow, and turn the lower ends in neatly to form a point. These pieces should be not less than twelve inches long. To one of the points fasten a needle-book made in the form of a heart. To make it, cut two pieces of pasteboard, heart-shaped, line and cover them neatly with any pretty material, fasten smaller heart-shaped pieces of flannel inside to hold the needles, join the covers together at the top, and tie the points together with narrow ribbon. Paint or embroider a little design on the outside, or, in case you can do neither, do not disdain a pretty embossed picture. On a second point fasten a daisy pincushion. Take a real "ox-eye daisy" for your model. Make the centre of yellow velvet, having the cushion about as large over as the top of a teacup when

finished and stuffed with perfumed cotton. Cut as many petals as will go twice around this, setting one row behind the other so that the tips of the petals will show between those of the front row, and laying a little plait in the square end of each petal. These should be cut from white felt. On the third point suspend a scissors case, which may, if desired, contain a pair of nice scissors. Make the case of fancy leather or of velvet or satin, lined with crinoline, after directions given in last January's number of the "HOME" MAGAZINE. If desired, two more ends of ribbon may be attached to the bow, and on the point of one an emery ball to represent a strawberry, of scarlet velvet, with green silk seeds stitched in, and a green satin "hull" at the top, having a loop of coarse green silk in the centre to suspend the ball. Fill the strawberry, of course, with emery dust or fine iron filings. Form the last piece of ribbon into a thimble-holder in this way: Have the end cut very evenly across, turn in the raw edge, and blind-stitch it down. Then fold up the corners and sew them together to form a point, having the pocket come on the outside, ornamenting it with a tiny scrap picture, or otherwise, and fastening a little bow of ribbon, with loops, at the extreme point. Any one of these articles described would make a very acceptable little present in itself.

For the dear grandmother, who is confined so much to the house when the cold winter days arrive, a pair of bed-room or worsted slippers would be just the thing. They are, indeed, nice for any one. Use Germantown wool and a medium-sized bone hook. For a number three or four sole make a chain of thirteen stitches. Work one d. c. (double crochet, that is, put the hook through the work, and draw the wool through, making two stitches on the hook; then take up the wool and draw through these two stitches), in the back loop of each stitch of the chain, across once. Then turn, work one d. c. into each of first six loops; increase in middle by working three d. c. into the seventh stitch, or loop, then work one d. c. into each of the next six loops, turn. Repeat this row until there are thirty rows or fifteen ridges, counting two rows to a ridge. Next, go up the side eighteen or twenty loops, turn and go down again, then back,

working in d. c. as directed for the toe, and continuing until the slippers are long enough. Make the other side in the same way and sew up the heel; or, if desired, the strap can be continued around the heel and joined to the opposite side of the front piece. For a border in which to run cord or a ribbon, make one t. c. (treble crochet, for which put the wool over the hook before inserting in the work, draw the wool through, making three stitches on the hook; put the wool over, draw it through two stitches, then over again and draw through the remaining two), one chain, one t. c., one chain, and so on around. Then finish with the top with a row of shells (three t. c., two chain, three t. c. in same loop, fasten in next stitch with one d. c., and repeat). Line with any desirable material—colored cotton flannel is nice. Procure a pair of lambs' wool soles, or cut them out of heavy felt yourself, and sew the top firmly to them. If preferred, elastic may be run in the spaces instead of ribbon or cord, and the toe finished with a ribbon bow or other ornament.

A dainty bureau lining, which would be nice for any lady, is made by taking two pieces of cheese cloth, placing between them a layer of perfumed cotton, and tacking through it, comforter-fashion, with bright colored floss or worsted. Button-hole-stitch the edge, or finish with a narrow frill of lace, and have the sachet, when completed, just large enough to cover the bottom of a bureau drawer. It would be especially pretty to have a little pattern painted or embroidered on the upper side.

For a "cute" hair-pin holder take a round tin box—a small oyster can will answer every purpose. Turn it bottom up on the kitchen stove long enough to melt the top off neatly. Take a piece of velvet, satin, or any pretty material long enough to go around the can and wide enough to extend an inch or so beyond top and bottom. Whip the lower edge with strong thread, draw tightly, and fasten across the bottom, so it will lay smoothly, then turn the upper edge over into the can, and glue down firmly. Fill the can half full of sand, or, what is a nicer way, put it in a bag. Make a chain of worsted of a color to match or contrast prettily with the covering of the can, crochet along the chain, pulling the stitches through to form loops about half an inch long, and close

together. Then form the chain into a round to fit the top of the can, sewing it on a foundation of coarse netting, so that when completed nothing will show but the loops, and fasten neatly or the top. Finish top and bottom with a quilling of ribbon to match the rest of the holder. Before covering the can, paint or embroider a pretty design on it, if possible; or a silk applique would be nice, or even a pretty scrap picture. I have seen these holders covered with perforated cardboard, ornamented with patterns in cross stitch. A friend of mine has a set, hair-pin holder, cushion, and hair receiver, made as I have described, except that the latter is lined neatly with satin paper, and has a pasteboard cover, covered the same as the can and hinged on with a bow of ribbon, with a loop of the ribbon to lift it by. The pincushion can is filled with a bag of cotton, bran, or nice sand, and the top covered with a piece of the material used for covering the can. Either of these would make a pretty gift, alone; but the set is especially desirable.

I am writing too much, I fear, and I have not half begun to give the hints I wish to give. I wonder if the little folks would not like to know how to make a shaving-paper book for papa? Cut a piece of perforated cardboard about eighteen inches long and six inches wide. Work the edge around, and a little pattern in the centre, in cross-stitch. Then cut a piece of thin lining silk of the size of the cardboard and bind the two together with very narrow ribbon, double the strip to form a book, punch holes at top and bottom of the back, and tie in as many sheets of tissue or clear white paper as you wish to, and sew two bits of narrow ribbon to the front to tie it together with. If you wish, you can make a pretty needle-book for mamma in the same way, making the book very much smaller, of course, and putting leaves of flannel. You can knit a set of reins for little brother of odds and ends of yarns and worsteds, taking them up on two needles, about one and one half an inch wide, and knitting back and forth in garter-stitch. For little sister get some sheets of tinted cardboard, paste scrap pictures and pretty cards of all sorts all over them, then tie together at the back with bright colored ribbons.

I must stop or I shall fill the whole space allotted to our "Notes." Next year, friends, let us begin earlier, and each give descriptions of some simple, home-made Christmas gifts. AUNT PENELOPE.

MAY WE COME IN?

We have long wanted to make a visit to the "HOME," but were almost afraid to venture to the door, and we wanted to have something to tell that might benefit somebody else, too.

Peaches were very expensive here this fall, so to make our half bushel go farther in jam (or butter), we took about one-third nice, sweet apples, of which we had plenty, stewed, mashed, and added to the peaches, and we don't think you could tell there was an apple in them.

Another thing is pickled apples. We had always quartered and cored ours and they tasted too sweet, and we got tired of them. This year the apples were small, but some were smooth and sound. We just peeled them and left them whole, with the stem on; then to every pint of good, strong vinegar, we put a pint of water and three-quarters of a pint of sugar. Boil, and when almost done, add spices. We used cloves, allspice, and a little cinnamon. They were very nice, but we think they should be canned or sealed to keep well. We used granulated sugar.

We enjoy the HOME MAGAZINE very much, and like to take a fresh one, sit down by a nice, warm fire, cut the leaves, and take a peep at every one, before settling down to read the dear, good, homey, pages. Our niece, a dear girl from away up among the New England hills, visited us this summer, and one day when reading in the "HOME" she said to me: "They are so good; mamma says, perhaps we'll take them." She took "lots" of patterns home with her out of our old Magazines.

Now, if the door is opened and we are bidden enter the circle for one brief moment, we shall be happy, indeed.

MAGNETIC SPRINGS, O. SISTER SIS.

[Thank you for your helpful ideas and appreciative words. You are "bidden to enter the circle" every month, if possible.]

GOOD SUGGESTIONS.

DEAR "HOME:"—I would like to tell "Sister Mary" that she has found the

golden specific for blues. Work for others, doing good as we have opportunity, looking about us to see those who have so much more cause for "blues" than ourselves, will always "scare them off" and leave us happy and thankful.

For a lesser help, try the puzzle corner. Change of work works wonders. One wearies of the ceaseless round of "woman's work" (the homely, every-day duties), no matter how much love we put in it, and though it is for those we love best. Try it, sisters; a half hour with the puzzles will brush the cobwebs from your brains and you'll darn the stockings and wash the dishes all the better next day. I know whereof I speak—am my own housekeeper for a family of six.

LEXINGTON, ILL.

D. E. B.

[And we'll add a little further suggestion for "brushing up the brain:" write a good, helpful letter for the "HOME" housekeepers' department occasionally.]

HINTS FOR CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

DEAR EDITOR:—Noticing "Anxious Auntie's" call in the October number of our interesting department, which I feel like thanking the editor of the HOME MAGAZINE for every day, I made up my mind that I would try and break the ice by offering her a few suggestions, which, I trust, will be acceptable. To begin, why does she care particularly for a tree? This device for the giving of gifts is as old as the hills themselves, and a great deal of work. Why not, for a change, try the "Christmas Pie"? We had one at our house last year, and it gave universal satisfaction. Of course, the presents are to be surprises, the same as if put on a tree, and should be done up in oddly-shaped packages, each marked with the recipient's name, and that of the giver, if desired. These packages are put into a tub or clothes-basket, which is covered with a cloth and placed on a stand in the centre of the room. Each member of the family in turn "puts in his thumb and pulls out a plum," Jack Horner like, reads aloud the name or names written on it, and passes it to the one for whom it was intended. This continues until the basket is empty and all have received their presents. Of course, the more surprise the more fun; a locket or ring done up in many wrappings

and boxes will cause much merriment as the various coverings are removed.

Christmas wreaths and festoons are easily and rapidly made. Take a small rope and tie the smallest branches or tips of evergreens, spruce, fir, etc., thickly upon it with twine. A very good representation of snow for these and for the tree itself is cotton batting, lightly pick-up and fastened on in patches, here and there. Touch the batting with white mucilage lightly and scatter on diamond powder. If white letters are desired, use cotton batting and sprinkle with the powder.

Popped corn, threaded in long strings, red-cheeked apples, golden oranges, sticks of striped candy tied together, home-made corn-balls, stars cut from gilt paper and fastened to the tips of the branches, and lace bags filled with bright candies, are all extremely pretty adjuncts of a Christmas tree and will help to keep the little people who are so anxious to "do something for Christmas" busy and happy in assisting to prepare them.

One Christmas I made some fancy cakes for our tree after an old recipe. To make these "daisy cakes" take one cup of granulated sugar, one-half cup of butter, and one-half cup of sour cream, two eggs, one scant teaspoonful of soda dissolved in a very little cold water; flavor with nutmeg and use flour to roll, taking care not to get the dough too hard. Roll out like cookies (which, in fact, they are) and cut with a scalloped cookie cutter. Bake in a slow oven, and do not let them overdo. Prepare an ordinary frosting with the white of one egg and powdered sugar, having it just stiff enough to keep the shape. Take some of this in a confectioner's syringe or a little roll of stiff white paper with the point cut off, and put white petals on the cakes when cold, not bringing them quite together in the centre. Make a frosting of the yolk of the egg and sugar and make the centre of the daisy of this, a spot about the size of a copper cent. Flavor both kinds of frosting to taste.

Hoping that what I have written may be of service to some one, and wishing the "HOME" housekeeper all success, I will close.

L. H. M.

RAISED BISCUIT.

EDITOR "HOME" HOUSEKEEPER:—I am very much interested in this department:

of our Magazine. Though often weary and very busy when I take it up, I read a little while and gain new ideas, and strength and courage to go on, make the most of time and talents, and thank God that we live in a land where there are such magazines as the "HOME" to help us. Then I sometimes wonder why I may not tell the sisters something new to them. I am not accustomed to put ideas of this kind in writing, but have a way of making raised biscuit that is easy and sure every time with me. A cousin told me of it—here it is; if any one uses it, please let us know if successful. I will make it as plain as possible. When the biscuit are ready to put in the shortening, instead of mixing it in the usual way, melt the same quantity (I use lard and butter mixed) in the pan they are to be put into, roll each biscuit over once in the melted shortening while it is warm, but not hot, pack them nicely in place, and let them rise as usual. When taking them out of the pan, wrap a towel around the pan, as they fall apart easily. If wishing to keep them a day or two, I do mix in a little butter sometimes. If not intruding, I may come again with other tried recipes. Respectfully,
M. E. M.

[No intrusion, at all; we shall be happy to hear from you often.]

GIFTS AND CANDIES.

A hair-pin holder made by the following directions will be a most acceptable Christmas gift. Get a tiny basket, varnish it, and sprinkle over it while the varnish is yet "tacky," some bronze or gilding powder, fill it with curled hair, and knit a cover of fine wool, winding it over the finger while knitting, so as to form fluffy loops. It is pretty to knit in tinsel with these loops. Fasten the cover over the top of the basket, which is prettiest to be oblong in shape, and tie a satin ribbon bow, matching the cover in color, upon the handle.

Scrap bags are always acceptable. A pretty one to hang on the sewing-machine or table is made by covering a piece of pasteboard about sixteen inches long by five inches in width with velvet, painted or embroidered, lining with satine, and joining in a circle. Sew a full gathered bag of satin or other nice material to the

lower edge, lining this also with the satine. Decorate with ribbon bows and suspend by ribbon. An easier and quite as pretty way, is to cut the outside and lining alike, about twelve inches wide. Seam each together at the side, then sew the tops of both together so that the raw seam will come inside when turned. Turn, slip in the ring of pasteboard, catching it in place with a few invisible stitches. Draw the bottom up neatly, covering the stitches with a large bow of ribbon.

COCOANUT CANDY.—Two cupfuls of white sugar, one cupful of water—boil six minutes. When ready to take it from the fire, stir in one cupful of desiccated cocoanut, and pour at once into square buttered tins. When partly cooled, mark it off in strips or squares.

PEANUT CANDY.—Four quarts of peanuts (before they are shelled), two cupfuls of molasses, two spoonfuls of vanilla, two-thirds of a teaspoonful of soda. Boil the molasses (I think the candy is full nicer if one-half sugar is used), until it hardens in cold water, then add the vanilla, then the soda, and lastly the shelled peanuts, which we always chop slightly. Turn out in buttered platters, and mark off in squares when nearly cold.

Will some friend kindly tell me how to prevent or cure chilblains? Just as soon as cold weather begins to come on, I begin to be troubled with these very disagreeable things, and I would be glad to know of a remedy.

I would like to say to "Aunt Christine" that I have tried her hard frosting, and like it very much indeed.

ADDIE C. S.

A PRETTY SACHET.

DEAR "HOME:"—At last I shall be able to give a little help to some one, in return for the good received. I noticed that "Anxious Auntie" wanted directions for making inexpensive Christmas gifts. Why doesn't she try, for one, a soda-cracker sachet?

Cut two pieces of crinoline the size of a square soda cracker, cover each with silk as near the color of the cracker as possi-

ble, place a layer of cotton wadding between the halves, sprinkle this with sachet powder, and overhand the halves together. Tack the surfaces together to imitate the little dents seen in the cracker; and lastly pass a hot iron lightly over it to give it the natural brown tint.

MARGUERITA.

RECIPES GIVEN AND WANTED.

DEAR "HOME" HOUSEKEEPERS:—I take much interest in this department, and have derived many helpful suggestions from the "Notes." In response to Lulu H. B., requesting a recipe for cottage pudding, I send the following, which is excellent:

COTTAGE PUDDING.—One cup sugar, half cup butter, one egg, one cup sweet milk, three cups flour, three teaspoons baking powder sifted with the flour, half teaspoon extract of lemon. Bake in small bread pan, and when done cut in squares, and serve with sauce made of two tablespoons butter, one cup sugar, one tablespoon flour wet with a little cold water and stirred until smooth, one pint boiling water. Boil two or three minutes, and after taking from the stove flavor with half teaspoon extract of lemon.

CORN-STARCH PUDDING.—Cook in saucepan, or vessel that can be set in kettle of boiling water. Can be cooked without being set in boiling water, but is liable to scorch. Take one quart sweet milk, keeping out one-half pint, and heat boiling hot, then add four tablespoons corn-starch previously wet, and stirred until smooth, with the milk kept out, four tablespoons sugar, and small teaspoon lemon extract. Stir briskly five minutes, or until thick, and the starch cooked. Serve with sauce made the same as for cottage pudding.

"FARMER'S WIFE."—The oven being too hot is probably the cause of the cake cracking open on top. Try a slower oven, do not make the batter too stiff, and when put in the oven cover with a "cap" made of a square of brown wrapping paper large enough to go over the cake pan when the corners are folded over and pinned. For a good every day-cake made with sour cream, take two cups sugar,

three eggs, one cup sour cream, three cups flour, one small teaspoon soda sifted with the flour, half teaspoon lemon extract. Hoping some will be aided by this, I now ask if some of the "HOME" housekeepers will send a good recipe for vinegar pie.

A. J. M.

["Tried and true" recipes are always appreciated by our housekeepers, who will hope to hear from you frequently, and will, no doubt, furnish the recipe you ask for.]

SOME HINTS ON BAKING.

DEAR FRIENDS:—Am a young housekeeper and am very much interested in this department. Would like to add my mite to the columns in reply to Farmer's Wife "why cake cracks open on top while cooking."

It has too much flour; pastry flour is best for cake; it should be sifted and measured. A great deal depends on baking cake. The heat should be moderate and steady for loaf cake; it is well to divide the time into quarters. The first quarter let it rise; the next begin to bake; the third continue to brown; it usually takes loaf cake an hour to bake. Always line the bottom of baking tin with thin paper well buttered, and you will have no trouble in getting the cake out, which should be done immediately on taking from the oven. A good way to tell when cake is done, take a fine straw and put through the centre; if dry, cake is done.

Think it more difficult to cook with cream than milk and butter, for cream is not always the same consistency.

Will give you a recipe for cake: One cup maple sugar or fine granulated white; one cup sour cream; half teaspoon soda; two cups flour; a little salt put with two eggs and beat well, add last. Fruit can be added to same recipe. Also a ginger cake made the same, substituting molasses for sugar; add one tablespoon ginger.

BISCUIT.—Five tablespoons buttermilk or sour milk to one large cup sour cream; one teaspoon soda, salt; flour enough to roll soft.

To Lulu H. B., who wished a recipe for Cottage Pudding. One cup sugar; butter size of an egg worked to a cream; one cup

milk; one teaspoon soda; two of cream of tartar mixed and dissolved in milk; two cups flour; add last one egg beaten light.

SAUCE FOR PUDDING.—Melt one tablespoon butter; add to hot butter two tablespoons of flour and one and a half cups hot water; cook well; add one cup sugar; flavor to taste.

Hope you will find this satisfactory if

tried. Have several pudding recipes, think are good, but will not burden you with any more at present. Hope to see suggestions for inexpensive Christmas presents in our good Magazine.

MAUD.

[As you may see, our Housekeepers' Department smacks strongly of Christmas time. We shall be very glad of the recipes you mention.]

"HOME" PUZZLES.

SOLUTIONS and solvers' names in the February number. All communications relative to this page must be addressed to the "Puzzle Editor HOME MAGAZINE," Box 913, Philadelphia, Pa.

"HOME" PUZZLE No. 75.

HALF SQUARE.

1. A female who takes care of cattle (rare).
2. To twist together.
3. To wait on.
4. A light, twilled cotton or woolen stuff, used for summer clothing.
5. The external covering, or coat.
6. The conclusion.
7. An abbreviation.
8. A letter.

OSMAR.

My 25, 20, 17, 16, 9, 1, 22, 10, 14, 20, is a flower.

My 8, 15, 22, 11, is a southern county of Ireland.

My 13, 25, 5, 22, 11, is a large sea-fish.

My 4, 7, 12, 24, 20, 22, 7, is a profound secret.

My whole is a well-known proverb.

DOT.

"HOME" PUZZLE No. 79.

NAMES OF AUTHORS, ENIGMATICALLY EXPRESSED.

1. A joyous cry in the desert.
2. A region of anger.
3. What do you do when you smoke a cigar?
4. Capital, and a heavy weight.
5. Pertaining to a cask.
6. A ruler in the church.
7. Wan.
8. A deer.

C. H. S.

"HOME" PUZZLE No. 80.

LETTER REBUS.

C
I
S

ETHEL.

"HOME" PUZZLE No. 81.

POETICAL ENIGMA.

My first is in wrong, but never in right;
My second in heartaches, hardships, and blight;
My third is in misery, whole's nearest kin;
My fourth is in sorrow, and sadness, and sin;
My fifth is in killing, but never in life;
My sixth is in envy, and also in strife;
My seventh in destroy, but not in build up;
My whole is a poison that no man should sup.

JOHNNY.

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER "HOME" PUZZLES.

No. 63.

March—arch—march—charm.

"HOME" PUZZLE No. 76.

SYNCOPIATIONS.

1. Syncopate to sew slightly and leave to except.
2. An Abyssinian weight, and leave German millet.
3. To forerun, and leave one who occupies.
4. To seize, and leave to exchange.
5. Condescension, and leave to delay.
6. The American partridge, and leave to invent.

The syncopated words are of equal length, and the central row of letters, read downward, will name a place where many boys and girls do not like to go.

JULIA HALLEY.

"HOME" PUZZLE No. 77.

VERSIFIED CHARADE.

As I sit in the evening and first my lay,
Second look o'er the waters, clear as day,
And see what I'm told by my common sense
To be my whole on a picket-fence.

MAY BLOSSOM.

"HOME" PUZZLE No. 78.

NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

I am composed of 25 letters.

My 18, 5, 21, 17, 20, is an article of furniture.

My 14, 2, 24, 5, 1, 23, is a vegetable.

My 22, 3, 21, 16, 6, is a bird.

No. 64.

P
CAR
CALEB
CARACAL
PALAVERED
RECEDED
BARED
LED
D

No. 66.

1. B-link—ink. 2. C—lark—ark. 3. C—
harm—arm.

No. 67.

D
LIE
SEALS
ZOO LITE

No. 68.

1. Eider duck. 2. Rhinoceros. 3. Buffalo.
4. Horse. 5. Chicken. 6. Potato.

SOLVERS.

October "HOME" puzzles were solved (partially) by "Osmar," "Ruel P. S.," "O. W. L.," "Merry Mack," Mrs. H. D. S., "Peri Winkle," C. A. S., Johnny, D. E. B., Ora S., M. A. P., Charley M., Marjorie, Ayer, Katie McF., F. R. C., Anna McCallum, Lewis Johnson. Elva, "Little Nell," A. G. C., H. P. Rogers, Grover, "Johnny-Jump-Up," Mamie B. Carson, Dolly, Mrs. A. L. G., Lora Mayhew, Laila Mayhew, "Fan C.," Ella H. S., Nettie M., Mrs. M. H., "Joker," Marguerita, Anna Young, Kate M. Johnson, M. F. C., Master Freddie Todd, "Punch and Judy," J. L. W., Pansy, S. F., and Peter Piper.

ROLL OF HONOR.

Complete lists of answers to October "HOME"

No. 65.

I. ZHO
HER
ORB
II. MAST
ANNA
SNAP
TAPE
III. LAVER
AGAVE
VAREC
EVERT
RECTO

puzzles have been received from "Tranza," C. R. T., Sara, "Brownie," "Mike A. Doe," Mabel E., "Biddy Ford," and "Lucy Firr." Lists from "Tranza," Mabel E., C. R. T., Sara, and "Brownie" were received at one time, and as there was no choice as "first received," we awarded the prize for correct list to Mabel E., she not having previously received one.

Best incomplete list, *Planting the Wilderness*, Kate M. Johnson. Second best incomplete list, a handsome cleograph, D. E. B.

PRIZE OFFERS.

Wishing to give a Christmas flavor to our puzzle feast for December, we make the following offer of articles suitable for Christmas gifts:

For the first complete list of answers: A stamped linen cane and umbrella case. For second complete list: A stamped linen slipper case. For first, second, and third incomplete lists each, we offer materials for making a satin sachet. For first answer to No. 80, a beautiful Christmas card. Solutions must reach the "HOME" office by December 15th, in order to be credited in the February number, and we will send the prizes as soon as the first solutions are received, so that they will be in season for Christmas.

CHAT.

D. E. B.—By some error the title "Word Squares" was not placed above "Lucy Firr's" puzzle. We are glad you are so much interested in the puzzle corner, and hope you will like your prize.

M. A. P.—Solutions must all be in by the 15th of each month, as stated elsewhere. Many answers are received too late to be credited.

"Mike A. Doe."—Yes, we shall give a handsome prize, *The Garden of the Heart*, to the puzzler whose name appears oftenest on the "Roll of Honor" during the year ending September, 1888.

FASHIONS.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

IT is well to review our clothes and see how we can make the best of them before actually buying new garments for winter wear.

The best plan is to take time by the forelock, and so to overhaul and consider last winter's clothes as to make them whole, neat, and trim before any necessity for putting them on arises. Perhaps there is a checked woolen or a cashmere laying by that is almost on its last legs, and yet some parts of it are so good that we feel it ought to do us further service. The

sleeves may want new upper sides, and we can make new under pieces out of the old upper ones, and by putting cuffs and neck-band of plush or velvet in a darker shade, and fresh buttons, our dress will be quite presentable again. Or suppose it is worn under the arms, we may undo the seams, take out part of the sleeve, and put in a couple of neat patches, after which we re-stitch the seams and again sew the sleeves in the right place. This is what may be called a temporary measure, but as patched places have a trick of wearing through again directly, it is as well to make a Figaro jacket, which is sleeveless and smart

looking, and exactly hides the worn-out places. This small jacket may be made either of the same stuff as the dress or of velveteen or plush, or any nice material in a darker color, or it may be in black, with a gray or a black and white dress. If made in the velveteen or plush, the edge may be turned in all round, and will need no further trimming, or a satin cording looks nice, or if of the same stuff as the dress a little gimp or braiding, a shade or two darker, prevents the appearance of too strong a contrast between the old and the new parts.

Before winter actually sets in it is very desirable to have a muff, not merely because it keeps the hands warm, but because it is most valuable to hold up to the chest, the throat, or the mouth when suddenly meeting a blast of cold air, or discovering that the wind has changed since you left home. There is nothing to equal a fur muff, but furs are expensive, though some kinds of sealskin are very much more moderate in price than formerly, and muffs made of satin or velvet to match the bonnet or hat are very much worn. There is some art in making a muff, and amateurs often fail because they do not exactly know how to set about it. First take the velvet or whatever you mean to have for the outside, cut an oblong piece rather wider than you wish the muff to appear, stitch it up, and iron the seam if necessary. Then turn under and tack each edge, and turn inside out. On this place three or four thicknesses of wadding, cut about an inch narrower, tack this safely over the wrong side of the velvet, and proceed with the lining, which should be silk or satin, though black or brown Italian cloth will do at a pinch. Take a piece of thickish cord and sew in a round that will allow your hand to go through easily, and run it into one end of your lining, which must be quite tight over the wadding and seamed up like the outside. Allow quite an inch of lining beyond the place where the cord is run in, and put in a similar round of cord at the opposite end. Now turn your muff inside out again, and very neatly sew the lining (turned in, of course) to the tacked edge of the velvet. This will draw it in over the wadding and have quite a professional appearance. A pretty arrangement of ribbon loops placed over the seam

of the velvet will conceal it and look modish, and then the muff may be turned round and round, and no join will be visible. It is always wise to have a piece of silk cord passed through the muff so as to hang it round the neck, but it is necessary to keep this cord fresh, as if worn it looks to outsiders like a shabby bit of trimming outside the collar of the jacket or mantle.

Plush is not as fashionable as it was last winter, but it is so useful and wears so well that probably it will make a very slow retreat. If it gets wet, it must not be wiped dry at once, but allowed to dry as it will, and must then be brushed out with a brush soft enough not to injure the nap.

A new color likely to be very useful in velvet and cashmere, as well as in silk and satin, is called *La Baltique*; it is supposed to be the dark bluish green of deep sea water when you look down into it.

It is considered imperative this season that everything worn should match, as, for instance, the stockings, dress gloves, and even the petticoat. This is not very difficult for those who stick to one or two colors, such as black and dark blue, or cardinal or brown. Brown stockings and a brown dress look very neat, and with a black dress relieved with cardinal, stockings of either color may be worn. Cardinal is a color that washes well, and, moreover, mending yarns of that tint are always procurable. Very nice dark-green merino stockings are being made in several shades, and they bear washing well. Navy blue do the same, but lighter blues are a little difficult, and nothing is so sure to change as gray or pepper and salt, which when new look so very neat.

Cloaks for traveling use are indispensable at this season. They are always long and they cover the costume fully. The shape most used has a rolled sleeve starting from the back seam and a skirt gathered in the back, or with redingote plaits, cording or *passementerie* falls over the skirt. These cloaks are of waterproof silk, Scotch plaid serge, summer vigogne, summer "limousine," mohair, and light cloth. Some models have Watteau plaits in the back, ironed down, and the slightly full fronts are sewed to the waist of the garment. Cording covers the part where the waist and skirt are joined. Another style is plaited down the whole front and has several small collars reaching to the shoul-

der. A number of very light garments are of silk étamine or woollen goods in beige or "ficelle" colors, lined with colored silks. The favorite tones for traveling garments are light brown, bluish gray, smoke gray, or beige gray. Some traveling dresses in course of making for bridal trousseaus are of Scotch plaid woollen goods, with blue or beige grounds. The jackets are of plain cloth in the darkest color of the suit or of fancy ribbed or curled goods.

Velvet fichus in garnet, brass, red, mignonette, and steel, surrounded by jet galloon, are in vogue. They are worn with lace sleeves trimmed with jet fringe. There are also fichus of black beaded tulle with sleeves to match covered with jet.

HOME-MADE MILLINERY.

MILLINERY materials for the winter do not present any striking novelty. Bonnets are still worn high, though there is a tendency to greater width in the arrangement of the trimmings. The fronts are pointed and are trimmed in a variety of ways. Flowers have been chiefly used as trimmings, but these are now being supplanted by feathers, birds, and ornaments. Plumage promises to be very popular as the season advances, and probably through the winter.

Very charming bonnets are made of shot velvet. Brown and gold shot velvet is made up with brown and gold-striped moire ribbon and a wreath of creamy marguerites borders the front. With a dress of gray homespun, a bonnet of gray and red shot velvet was worn. Dark gray ribbon, spotted with red, trimmed the front; a wreath of dark red and gray velvet leaves was placed so as to rest on the hair.

Among the prettiest combinations of colors are these: brown, black, or gray velvet shot with vieux rose. In every instance the colors of the velvets are reproduced in the floral or feather trimmings. Fawn, gobelin-blue, or red velvet, shot with cream; green, navy-blue, black, or white velvet, shot with silver or gold; prune, claret, or Burgundy velvet, shot with gold, silver, pale pink, or a delicate shade of sulphur color; heliotrope, shot with crimson, pink, black, white, gold, silver, green, peach-color, or gray; *bois de rose* velvet, shot with delicate or dark colors, is also very pretty.

Fashionable hats are turned up either on one side or on both, and sometimes at the back, though the latter style is considered less elegant, and therefore is not worn by persons of good taste now. All these hats are high-crowned; the brims are lined with velvet, and the trimmings consist of velvet or ribbon loops mingled with plumage. Complete birds, birds' wings, and plumage are much used.

Felt hats will be popular. A hat of blue-gray felt, lined with velvet to match, is trimmed with loops of striped velvet, and fancy pins intermixed. Black felt, lined with black velvet, has upright loops of the velvet forming a background to a red and black bird. Straw hats will also be worn, trimmed with a single ostrich tip, fastened with velvet at the left side. Bands of velvet, with buckles and clasps, encircle the crown.

In every instance, bonnets and hats match the costumes with which they are to be worn. The only and rare exceptions to the rule are black velvet hats and bonnets, which will pass with any gown, provided the color of the trimming is appropriately altered.

PUBLISHERS.

TO all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, with a specially warm greeting to our good old friends who continue from year to year to send us their clubs and subscriptions. This is the most practical evidence possible of the worth of the "HOME," and when we con-

sider that a great number of our old readers have always a kindly word to say of our work and the way it is done, we feel that it is not an altogether thankless task to be an editor.

Our good friends must not consider that their friendly greetings are unappreciated

because the editor does not reply personally to each one. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have an absolute conviction that the publication of this Magazine would have been suspended years ago but for the hearty support and encouragement received directly from our readers. Any one can, however, easily understand that all considerations have to give way to business necessities when during the subscription season letters come in daily literally by the thousand. To reply to them all is an impossibility, but to read them is not, and we hope that in the coming season we shall continue to receive the same hearty expressions of good-will as in the past, if our readers think that we have deserved them.

THE EDITOR.

We will, as heretofore, accept subscriptions to the leading periodicals in clubs with the "HOME MAGAZINE" for any of our club-makers and subscribers who may wish to send their remittances to us.

In clubbing, add the wholesale price of the periodicals required to the cost of the "HOME," and send money for the total amount. Any of our subscribers who have not a wholesale price list we will endeavor to supply on application (with return postage included).

New subscribers will confer a great favor if they will notify us promptly of mistakes in addresses, however slight the changes required. We wish to have them absolutely correct, and we hope our subscribers will not rest content till the label on each magazine is printed accurately.

A postal card stating what is printed and what the address *should* be—including name of Post-office and State—will be all that is required.

Do not fail to read the Prospectus of the Magazine for 1888, printed on second front page of this number. If any one has read it, a second reading will do no harm: indeed, a second reading may do some good that a first reading did not. It may suggest to the reader that he or she shall start in to make up a club for 1888. Nobody can possibly know what can be done in this way till a trial is made. As we have said many times, every reader gained

to the Magazine gives a distinct impetus to it, and thereby enables us to better serve those who read the "HOME" regularly. Remember, an effort to extend the circulation of the "HOME MAGAZINE" is a three-fold service—once to the person who makes the effort, once more to the new reader, and last a benefit to the publisher; and though the last is not least in this matter, neither is it greatest. We are inclined to believe that the greatest benefit is that shared by all three parties in what may be summarized as "incentive to effort."

Charles Scribner's Sons have published *The American Girls' Handy Book—How to Amuse Yourself and Others*.

This is a book that really has a place to fill, and will be found "handy," sure enough, wherever there are any young people to be entertained, not to say instructed.

The book contains some four hundred and seventy pages, profusely illustrated, the main topics being home amusements for the different seasons, decoration, and needlework. In the preface, the authors say: "It has been our endeavor to make the book peculiarly American. We have sought to introduce original ideas, and by them to open new avenues of enterprise and enjoyment. The materials employed in the construction of the various articles are within easy reach of everybody, and the outlay, in most cases, little or nothing."

Right well the authors have carried out their intention, and we don't believe we could suggest a more acceptable Christmas present to a girl.

Price, three dollars. Publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Several distinguished soldiers of the Civil War, including General Horace Porter, General Alfred Pleasonton, Colonel J. S. Mosby, and Colonel T. W. Higginson, will contribute a series of articles to the *Youth's Companion* during the coming year on "Boys in the Army." The articles will be full of incidents and designs to illustrate the valor and the peculiarities of young soldiers.

About ten years ago Pyle's Pearline first came to the relief of overworked

women. It had many prejudices to live down, but to-day it stands prominently among the American labor-saving invention. Many millions of packages of Pearl-line are consumed annually by an economical class of women who have found by experience that it will do all that is claimed for it. Our readers will do well to give this article a fair trial.

The most unique and beautiful building blocks that we have ever seen are the "Anchor Stone Blocks" advertised by F. Ad. Richter Co., of 310 Broadway, N. Y. See their announcement in our advertising pages and send your address to them for their catalogue and price list. You will find their blocks afford a wonderful amount of attractive entertainment for old as well as young.

IN THE HURRY OF SPEECH.—In the hurry of speech, and often in our very anx-

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